

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE
STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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NEW YORK, AUGUST 13, 1902.

Price 5 Cents.

GERALD O'GRADY'S GRIT; OR, THE BRANDED IRISH LAD.

By ALLYN DRAPER.



A fierce glare of hatred flashed from his eyes while he seized the cat-o'-nine-tails. "Oscar Costello, I'll give you what you gave me, and with a vengeance and a half at that." And the next instant he raised the instrument of torture.

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Gerald O'Grady's Grit

OR,

THE BRANDED IRISH LAD.

By **ALLYN DRAPER.**

CHAPTER I.

A YOUNG SOLDIER IN TROUBLE.

"I can't bear it any longer, Fannie, for I feel that I'll murder Oscar if he annoys me as he has been doing. Oh, my darling girl, if he wasn't your brother, I'd have choked the life out of him before this."

"Then you will desert, Gerald?"

"'Pon my honor, Fannie, I don't see what else I can do, unless you want to see me hung for murdering your father or brother—or both of them, for that matter."

"But, Gerald, you know the regiment is ordered off to the Crimea—to the war. If you ran away now and they should catch you, you would be shot as a deserter. And then, Gerald, what should I do?"

"And that's what troubles me, too, Fannie. They will say that I was afraid to go to the war. Oh, heavens and earth, as ever a poor fellow in such a hobble as I am?"

"And if you make off to America, Gerald, I will never see you again. Oh, Gerald, what is the reason that father and Oscar hate you so very much? You don't suppose they suspect that I am very fond of you?"

"Good heavens—no—Fannie! If they suspected that I might well tie a big stone around my neck and jump into the river, here, at once, for they'd have my life—they'd skin me alive—they even dreamed that we meet in this way."

"What can be the reason, then, Gerald? Did you ever fight with Oscar when you were at school together? Did you ever fight at him?"

"Not at all, Fannie. He was too big for me then, and we were always the best of friends. Don't you mind that we were together the first day I met you on the dyke?"

"I do, I do, Gerald. I'll never forget that day, my poor fellow. I never thought that day, and after, that I'd see you a common soldier, Gerald."

"And I curse the day that I ever 'listed, Fannie; but you know what drove me to it."

"Yes—yes, Gerald. You thought that Oscar would be your friend; and that's the reason you joined father's regiment."

"That wasn't the only reason, my darling. I wanted to be near some one that I was very fond of."

"And now you are going away from me, Gerald?"

"What can I do, my darling? I can't remain in the regiment with your father and brother, for I feel they mean to kill me or drive me mad. Every week I am ordered to the black hole, on bread and water, for little or no reason; and Oscar is never done casting slurs on me."

"But won't it be better for you when you are away at the war? And there's the chance of promotion, you know."

"'Twill be ten thousand times worse, Fannie; and 'twill end in my killing the pair of them, for though they're near to you, the blood in my veins can't stand it any longer. 'Twas only yesterday that Oscar threatened to have me flogged like a dog. Think of that, Fannie! Flog me! By the God above us, but I'd even forget that he was your brother if he ever tries his hand at that!"

And that proud young soldier's eyes flashed with anger as he withdrew his left arm from the young girl's waist, while he clenched his right hand and shook it at the barracks on the hill above him.

Gerald O'Grady was that young soldier's name; and the sweet young creature before him was Fannie Costello, the only daughter of the colonel of the regiment to which Gerald belonged.

They were standing that evening in a shady grove on the banks of the Bandon—a river that flows through one of the most fertile valleys in the south of Ireland.

Gerald O'Grady was as handsome an Irish lad as ever drew sword under the alien flag; and one glance at his glowing black eyes and compressed lips, at that moment, would convince you

that he was as brave and determined in danger as he was fair to look upon.

One year before the night on which we find him on the banks of that smiling river, Gerald O'Grady was living with his mother in the city of Cork, and attending an excellent school there.

One day the young lad returned from school only to find that his mother had disappeared from the lodging-house where they had been staying, without leaving a single word or line for her son.

Two or three days were passed by Gerald in anxious search and in making inquiries; but he could find no trace of that fond parent, and he could not account for her strange disappearance.

It was a mystery to him; there was something mysterious about his life; and he felt that there was some mystery shrouding his birth.

Gerald never knew who was his father; and it was only intimated to him by his mother that her husband was an unfortunate man who had been engaged in the rebellion of '48, and who had suffered for his patriotism by being transported to the English penal settlement in Australia.

Heretofore Gerald had never known want; but now, when his mother disappeared, he found that he had but a few shillings in the world; and he did not know of any friends or relatives in Ireland to whom he could turn for advice or assistance.

The young lad was as proud as the prince of the fallen angels; therefore he could not beg.

Had he lived one hundred years before, it is more than likely that he would have taken to the road, and he was just the lad to rival Dick Turpin and Captain Freney.

He could not get to America, that land of promise for so many of his race, and he could not get employment to give him bread in the land that gave him birth.

There was nothing for the young fellow to do—save to starve or to enlist under that alien flag which his mother had taught him to hate.

And thus Gerald was compelled (like thousands of his countrymen in other days) to wear the English red, while he dearly loved the Irish green.

While the young lad was at school he became intimate with Oscar Costello, whose father was the colonel of the regiment which Gerald afterward joined.

Gerald hoped, on entering into that regiment, that he would find a friend in his former schoolmate; and he also indulged in blissful dreams for the future, in which Fannie—the blue-eyed beauty—was ever present.

But the gallant young fellow had soon cause to curse the hour that he enlisted.

For the first three months all went well with Gerald, and his old schoolmate, who was now a lieutenant in his company, treated him in a kindly way; while many a sly smile from Fannie told him that he was not forgotten by the young girl, however much their stations in life might differ.

Gerald had never seen Colonel Costello until three months after entering the army, as that officer had been absent from his regiment on a sick leave for some time.

When the colonel discovered who Gerald was, after having encountered him on parade, he called his son into his room, and carefully closed the door after him.

After that day Gerald's life in the army was simply a hell upon earth.

The young man soon realized that Colonel Costello and his son were his bitter enemies; that they knew more of his history than was ever revealed to him; and that they were determined to crush him to the earth, "to kill him or drive him mad," as the young fellow had expressed it.

And yet, while the father and son hounded him day after

day, and week after week, punishing him for every trivial fault, and insulting him whenever opportunity offered, Gerald bore his ills with apparent humility, for he was assured that Fannie Costello was devotedly attached to him.

One stolen interview in the grove on the banks of that smiling river compensated for weeks of torture and indignity.

But the more Gerald bore his ills with apparent humility, fiercer and more annoying became the tyrants who seemed to be thirsting for his blood.

On the very day preceding the evening on which we find him with Fannie in the grove, Oscar Costello had threatened him with the lash—that degrading instrument of torture the application of which was worse than death to the high-spirited lad.

That threat determined Gerald's course of action.

Come what would, he would not remain where he was at the mercy of his merciless foes; for he knew full well that ere long they would drive him to commit an act which would render him liable to the degrading punishment.

And thus it was that he sought a last interview with Fannie flying from the service under those who were bent on destruction.

"Oh, Gerald!" cried Fannie, "I cannot blame you for being angry with Oscar; but don't look so cross at me, for I will go on my knees to father if I thought I could serve you. Gerald! if you must go to America, I will follow you there."

"Will you, Fannie?" cried the young fellow, as he passed his arm around her waist again. "When I make a fortune there will you come to me?"

"I will, indeed I will, Gerald!"

"Then my heart is light this blessed moment, my darling. And now I must be off across the country to Hinsdale before they'll miss me at the barracks."

"Walk to the end of the grove with me, Gerald," pleaded the young girl; "it may be years before we meet again."

"To be sure I will, my own darling!" was the endearing response.

And on they walked to the end of the grove, muttering words of eternal devotion; but they never dreamed that they were rushing into danger.

"Farewell, my darling!" said Gerald, as he embraced the girl for the last time. "I needn't ask you to be true to me for I know you will."

"Forever, Gerald!"

"You infernal scoundrel!" cried a tall young man in uniform, as he sprang out from a clump of young trees. "Home at once, you hussy!"

"'Tis Oscar! We're lost, Gerald!" gasped the young girl as she fled from the spot. "For heaven's sake, fly at once!"

"Stand, you villain!" roared the brother, as he sprang at Gerald with a heavy walking-cane uplifted in his hand. "Stand till I trounce you while I can stand over you, and then drag you before my father."

"Don't strike me, Lieutenant Costello, I warn you!" returned Gerald, as he retreated before the infuriated young officer. "Don't dare to touch me or——"

Down fell the heavy cane, and Gerald O'Grady was struck to the earth.

"Now, you dog—you vile cur—you ill-begotten wretch!" yelled the young officer, as he planted his foot on the prostrate lad and raised the cane again, "I'll teach you to even look at my sister. I'll murder you, you viper!"

But it was not a viper that Oscar Costello had crawled before him on the banks of that Irish river.

No hunter, even in the gloom of an African jungle, beholds such fierce eyes as those that glared up at him for a second.

Then there arose such a yell of rage and vengeance, and with a sudden bound, Gerald O'Grady flung aside his assailant and sprang to his feet.

And the next moment the heavy cane was plucked from the officer's hand.

"I warned you, Oscar Costello!" cried Gerald, as he raised the cane to his assailant, "not to strike me with this. Take that, you lying, rascally, cowardly blackguard! Down to the ground with you!"

Before the officer could spring aside the cane descended on his head with terrible effect, and the next moment he was stretched on the ground, with Gerald's foot on his breast.

"Cur—dog—ill-begotten villain—cowardly wretch!" cried Gerald, as he glared down at his foe. "Back in your teeth fling your vile words. Now, you spawn of a coward, I am even with you. Get up, if you dare, and fight me like a man!" Then Gerald struck his assailant one blow across the breast and flung the cane out into the rushing river.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIGHT BY THE RIVER'S SIDE.

Oscar Costello was half stunned and fairly crazed as he struggled to his feet, and then stood glaring at his old schoolmate.

Every pulse in Gerald's body was throbbing with rage and indignation as the recollection of his tortures and insults he had endured thronged to his mind.

Talk of cool science and skilled courage!

Nothing nerves the human heart when facing a foe so much as the memory of wrongs received.

No science can contend against the stern resolve that is bred in affliction and patient suffering.

Oscar Costello was a slashing specimen of the young bloods of that day. He was a splendid boxer; an excellent cricket player; he pulled a powerful stroke; he was a daring rider, and he was not a coward.

Being two years older than Gerald, and as many inches taller, the young officer had heretofore entertained a thorough contempt for his old schoolmate's fighting powers.

And even at that moment, when Gerald had given such signal proof of his strength and activity, Oscar Costello gloried in the conceit that he was his complete master in the manly art, and that he could vent his rage by giving him a severe lashing ere dragging him back to the barracks.

"I'll maim the scoundrel for life—aye! I'll kill him!" thought the young officer as he advanced on his opponent. "He has struck his superior officer and he deserves death!"

"This young villain is seeking my life," thought Gerald, as he stood waiting for the onslaught. "'Tis but just that I should crush him, and I'll suffer anyway if I'm taken; but when he's Fannie's brother, and his blood must not be on my hands. I'll give him a beating he'll never forget, at all events."

When Oscar Costello first regained his feet he was, as we have said, half stunned and fairly crazed; but in a few moments he recovered his senses and when he advanced on Gerald he was fully prepared to put forth all his strength and skill in the encounter to which he had been invited.

"You dastardly scoundrel!" he cried. "I'll teach you to dare even to look at my sister! You who are not even fit to pick her shoe!"

"I am more than your equal in every way, you mean upstart!" retorted Gerald, as he glared back defiance. "Your sister is an angel; you are a fiend. I am going to give you the finest dressing a young coxcomb ever had! I will marry your sister one of these days in spite of you and your contemptible hound of a father!"

With a cry of rage Oscar sprang on the insolent young soldier, aiming a blow at his head as he rushed on.

Gerald met the shock without flinching an inch, and he succeeded in parrying the blow with his left hand, while he sent in a stinger with his right that sent Oscar staggering back.

Before the young officer could put out his guard again, his determined opponent was on him like a flash, and thus—thud—thud! went the clenched fists on his eyes and nose.

And down went Oscar Costello, his head striking heavily on the ground.

"Have you enough, you cur?" cried Gerald as he stared at the prostrate officer. "Get up and face me again, for I'll not strike you down! Aha! I told you that I'd give you a sound thrashing!"

"Curse you, you infernal scoundrel!" yelled the enraged officer, as he sprang to his feet, "you'll never live to boast of your triumph, for I'll murder you on the spot!"

As the infuriated young man uttered these words, he drew a pistol from his pocket and presenting it full at Gerald's face blazed away.

A loud report rang out in that quiet valley, and Gerald felt a stinging sensation in the right ear.

"You treacherous hound!" yelled the young soldier as he dashed in on the officer and seized the weapon. "Now it's for life and death between us!"

Then the next moment they were both rolling on the ground, struggling, striking, and tearing away at each other like two young tigers.

Oscar Costello succeeded in wrenching the pistol from the young soldier's grasp, and with it he dealt two or three heavy blows on Gerald's face, as he yelled:

"I'll pound you alive, you base-born dog! Take that, and that—and—"

The young officer could not utter another word, for Gerald's hand was on his throat, and the pistol was torn from his grasp at the same moment.

"My turn now!" yelled the young soldier as he planted his knee on the officer's breast, while he brandished the pistol over him. "Take that, you false-hearted, treacherous cur!"

Down went the arm of the young soldier and the barrel of the pistol struck the officer in the eye.

"Great God!" he yelled, "I'm murdered! My eye—my eye! Help—help! I'm murdered!"

"The devil's cure to you!" cried Gerald, as he sprang to his feet. "You tried to kill me! You and your father have been trying to drive me wild with your infernal doings, and—"

"My eye—my eye!" yelled Oscar Costello, in an agonized voice, as he held his hand to the wounded member and struggled to his feet. "Oh, God, you have knocked my eye out!"

Gerald dropped the pistol, sprang forward, and withdrew the hand from Oscar's face, crying:

"Let me see. I'm sorry if it's as bad as that, though you deserved it. By heavens, your eye is out, Oscar Costello, and no mistake!"

The young officer sent forth a fearful yell and then dashed along the bank of the river toward the barracks, crying:

"I'll have you murdered for this. Father will have you hung. Murder! Help! Oh, God, my brain is on fire!"

Gerald stood for some minutes on the bank of the river gazing after his late opponent.

"I must give them leg-bail now," he muttered, "and no mistake, for I'll have the whole regiment out after me in a jiffy. By George! but I'll take this with me, as I may have use for it."

As the young deserter uttered these words he stooped down to pick up the pistol.

"Halloo!" he cried. "What's this? Hanged if it isn't his watch and chain that fell from him in the fight. I must send them to him somehow when I get to Kinsale. Now for—"

"Oh, Gerald—Gerald!" cried a soft voice near him, "you are lost if they catch you now; and what will become of me? Fly—fly! I saw it all! Oscar and father will be the death of you now!"

"One moment, young sir!" cried a stern voice near, "I saw it all, too!"

"Who are you, sir?" demanded Gerald, as he faced a tall, gray-haired man who had just emerged from behind a clump of bushes.

"No matter to you who I am," replied the old stranger; "you are called Gerald O'Grady?"

"I am. Do you mean to try and hinder me from escaping?"

As Gerald spoke he held the pistol in his hand as if ready to strike if the other advanced.

"I wish to help you, you goose," replied the old gentleman. "Hear them now. The alarm has sounded already and they are out after you."

"Fly, Gerald, fly!" cried Fannie. "Oh, gracious me, they'll kill you!"

"Off with that red jacket and fling it into the river!" cried the old stranger. "Put my coat on you. And never let me see you wear a red jacket again. Only you gave the scoundrel a good beating I would never forgive you for wearing it."

"Who are you, sir?" demanded Gerald, as he stared at the old stranger's stern face, while he proceeded to slip on the coat.

"I'm a friend of yours," was the reply, "and I hate your enemies. We have no time for palaver now, for you must be off. You can ride, of course?"

"Of course, sir."

"Come here, then, and mount this horse. Do you know the road to Kinsale?"

"To be sure I do, sir," replied Gerald, as he looked at the powerful black horse, which the old stranger led out from behind the bushes.

"Hear them—hear them!" cried the old stranger, as the bugle blast rang out from the barracks. "They are mounting for pursuit. Can you gain the bridge ahead of them?"

"I can swim the river, sir," replied Gerald, as he sprang on the black horse and pointed to the rushing stream.

"Take this purse, then, and away to Kinsale. Hire a fishing smack there and get over to France. Make your way to America, and I will meet you in New York to look for your mother."

"In God's name, who are you, sir?" demanded Gerald.

"No matter to you, I say. Away with you. I'll meet you in New York."

"Fly, Gerald, fly!" cried Fannie, as she seized the young soldier's hand. "They're coming down the lane now. Merciful heavens, if father catches you he'll murder you before my eyes!"

"Farewell, Fannie!" cried the young man. "You'll come to me, won't you?"

"I will, Gerald, I will! Oh, God, here they come!"

"And I'm away. Farewell, sir, and God bless you, whoever you are!"

Then the daring young fellow struck the spirited horse with a whip which he had taken from the old stranger, and forced him into the rushing river.

"Into the bushes, young lady!" said the old stranger, as he seized Fannie's hand and drew her away. "The bloodhounds are coming now!"

At that moment a dozen mounted dragoons dashed along the riverside, and at their head rode a tall man, raising his sword.

"Colonel Costello!" hissed the old stranger. "God's wrath be on him!"

"My father—my father, sir!" gasped the young girl. "Oh, God, he sees Gerald!"

"There goes the scoundrel!" cried the colonel, as he pointed to the horseman in the river. "In after him, men, and take

him alive till we torture him to death. A hundred pounds to the man who captures him!"

The dragoons sent up a ringing shout as they plunged the horses into the stream after their angry colonel; and a shout was scarcely re-echoed in the woods beyond when Gerald sent back his defiant response:

"Come on—come on, Colonel Costello! To the mischief pitch you all! Come on, and I'll serve you as I did your cur of a son. I'm only sorry I didn't knock out his other eye, his brains—while I was about it. To the mischief I pitch you!"

"Glory to you, my gallant fellow!" muttered the old stranger. "The old blood is in him. Thank God, he's got a good horse under him!"

"They'll kill him, sir; oh, they'll kill him!" muttered the young girl. "God help me this night, for I love him dearly."

"Put that out of your head, then," returned the old stranger in a fierce voice, "for he'll never marry one of your race. Ha! ha! He's gained the bank on them, and he's away up the hill. Now he'll show them his heels in earnest. Go home, miss—go home, and never think of that young lad again."

"Oh, don't say that, sir," pleaded the faithful girl, as tears sprang to her eyes. "I'll never forget poor Gerald. He don't be too sure of his escaping, sir; for father is riding the swiftest horse in the country."

"Then let him!" hissed the old man. "If he comes with the lad 'twill be his death, and that will ease me so much trouble. Go home, miss—go home."

As the old man uttered these words he dashed away through the grove, leaving the weeping girl to ponder over his strange conduct.

Away up the hill, through the orchard and out on the castle road dashed Gerald on the black horse, and after him rushed the dragoons, with their colonel far in advance.

"I'll take the fields for it," muttered the young fugitive. "The black horse jumps well. The colonel rides Fireaway, and I'm afraid he'll soon be up with me. 'Tis a pity I forgot my sword, or even a loaded pistol."

Wheeling to the left the young man forced the powerful black over a high ditch and then urged him across the fields toward the south.

"Nine miles to Kinsale," muttered Gerald, as he looked back and saw that the colonel was far in advance of him. "I can beat the others and I must manage to floor the colonel if he is Fannie's father; for 'tis all up with me if I am caught now. On—on, good horse. I wonder who that old gentleman be at all?"

And on—on it was for four miles, over hedges and ditches through meadows and plowed fields; and on after him rushed the vengeful father on his thoroughbred charger, Fireaway, while the dragoons were left far and away behind.

"He's gaining on me!" muttered Gerald, between his clenched teeth. "Soon 'twill be him and me for it, and he's sure to have his pistols. My horse is giving out."

And the fearful pace was telling on the black, noble animal though it was.

At every stride Fireaway was drawing nearer and nearer when Gerald looked back again he could see that the colonel held the bridle in his mouth while he grasped a pistol in each hand.

"He's bound to murder me!" muttered the lad as he grasped the empty pistol with which he had knocked out the soldier's eye. "By thunder! but I'll have one crack at him, anyhow."

Then suddenly wheeling his horse around, and ere the colonel could take aim, Gerald hurled the pistol at the man's head.

A cry of rage and pain burst from Colonel Costello as he fell from his horse, and the next moment Gerald was bending over him and dragging the pistols from his grasp.

CHAPTER III.

THE PLEADING GIRL AND THE VENGEFUL FATHER.

"I'll kill you now, Colonel Costello!" said the young desperado, as he aimed a weapon at the head of the prostrate man. "Mercy—mercy!" gasped the colonel. "Don't murder me and I'll let you off."

"The devil thank you," said Gerald. "Ha! ha! but this is a grand triumph! Father and son floored in one night. Say your prayers now, sir, for I'm going to blow your brains out!"

"Mercy—mercy! Gerald O'Grady, don't kill me and I'll make amends for all. Don't murder me, for my daughter's sake!"

"That saves you!" said Gerald, as he placed the weapons in his pocket and then drew the officer's sword from the scabbard. "That saves you—you tyrant—but it won't save your sword."

As the young soldier uttered these words he broke the sword on his knee and flung the pieces in the ditch near by.

"Now," he continued, as he sprang on the officer's thoroughbred, "I'm going to borrow Fireaway. Remember, Colonel Costello, that I spared your life for your daughter's sake, and I'll marry her yet in spite of you!"

"Curse you!" muttered the baffled man, as he sprang to his feet. "Ha! ha! now I've got you—you infernal villain! There are the troops."

"Confound the luck!" said Gerald, as he saw that he was surrounded on all sides. "They must have taken a short cut on me."

Gerald was right.

The dragoons felt assured that he was making for the sea-coast, and they took the old road across the country in order to head him off.

From the neighboring hill they had witnessed the struggle between the colonel and the fugitive, and riding down they had managed to surround Gerald while he was busy with his foe.

"Ride him down—ride him down!" yelled the colonel. "Take him alive, that we may hang him!"

"Hang me, if you do!" cried Gerald, as he forced Fireaway full against the nearest dragoon.

"Shoot the horse!" yelled the colonel.

Half a dozen pistol shots rang out the next moment, and the noble thoroughbred staggered forward and fell, bringing his desperate young rider with him to the ground.

"On him, men—on him!" sang out the enraged colonel as he sprang at his fallen foe. "Bind him as you would a calf, and drag him back to the barracks. Oh, the infernal scoundrel! but he'll suffer for this night's work!"

Poor Gerald was half stunned by the fall, and before he could offer any resistance the dragoons had him securely bound.

"Fireaway is ruined!" cried the angry colonel, as he stared at the noble animal.

"And your cur of a son has lost an eye!" cried the undaunted Gerald, as the dragoons dragged him away.

"I'll have your life for it, you infernal hound!" yelled the colonel as he sprang on Gerald and struck him in the face. "I'll have you lashed and branded and then shot like a dog as you are."

"But you'll never make me cry for mercy as I made you and your cowardly son," retorted Gerald, as he glared fiercely on the colonel.

"Back to the barracks with him!" yelled the infuriated man. "Put him in the black hole and don't give him a morsel to eat or drink. We'll court-martial him in the morning."

"That won't put your son's eye in or mend the sword I smashed on you," was Gerald's defiant cry. "I'm only sorry now I didn't kill you both!"

"Oh, spare him, father! For God's sake, spare him, I pray you! He's so young, and the punishment is so terrible—so dreadful!"

"If I had my way it would be death. Look at your brother—disfigured for life. Don't ever mention the scoundrel's name again, Fannie, or I'll disown you."

"Oh, father—father! I must beg for him. Oscar provoked him to it. I don't care if you kill me—I don't want to live if poor Gerald is lashed and branded to-day. 'Tis worse than death!"

"Leave me, you foolish girl!" cried the colonel, "for I hear the drum calling the troops out. Save him, indeed! If one word from me would spare him one lash I'd cut my tongue out before I'd utter it. I will never rest until I see the scoundrel dead before me! Dead—dead!"

And the vengeful man flung his daughter aside as he seized his hat and dashed out of the room.

Three days had passed away since the night of Gerald's capture, and the young soldier had been tried by court-martial.

Colonel Costello presided at the trial and his son was the principal witness against Gerald.

The young officer swore that Gerald assaulted him in the grove, and knocking him down with a stone proceeded to rob him.

"I managed to draw my pistol," continued the perjured scoundrel, "while he was in the act of taking the watch from me, and shot him in the ear. Then he seized the pistol and struck me in the eye with the barrel. He would have murdered me if I had not managed to break away and run to the barracks."

And the young officer withdrew the bandage from his eye in order to display the disfigured face.

Gerald could offer no defense, save to assert that the officer was the first aggressor.

He told the truth—but the truth did not avail him.

Colonel Costello insisted that the prisoner deserved disgrace and death; that no punishment was too severe for him; and contended that he should suffer the lash for having assaulted an officer; that he should be branded for having deserted in the time of war, and that he should be shot for having committed highway robbery in taking Oscar's watch.

The other members of the court did not fully agree with the vindictive colonel, and in consideration of the prisoner's youth he was sentenced to receive fifty lashes on the bare back—to be publicly branded as a deserter and then sent to a convict prison for a term of seven years, with a ball and chain.

A merciful sentence, indeed!

Gerald ground his teeth when the sentence was announced; but the brave lad did not utter a word or make a single sign to show that he was terrified at the terrible ordeal through which he would have to pass.

"I'd die before I'd let them lash and brand me," he said to the guard, as they led him back to the black hole; "but I'll live yet to serve out a worse dose to those who brought me to it."

The dreadful moment has arrived to administer the degrading punishment, and the soldiers are under arms in the barracks yard as the unfortunate prisoner is led out to the triangle.

Oscar Costello is there, his one eye still bandaged and the other glaring hate and vengeance on his fallen foe.

"Tie him up!" roared the colonel, as he pointed to the

triangle, "and see you, sir, that you lay on the lash with all your might."

Gerald O'Grady looked at the colonel for one moment, and then at his son, as he cried out:

"You have me in your power now, Colonel Costello, but remember what I say: If it was to be twenty years from now, I'll have my turn. For every cut that I receive now I'll give you and your son two for it. I'll make you both yell for mercy, towards that you are. You'll never hear a cry from me!"

"String him up and lay it on!" cried the enraged man. "We'll soon hear him cry for mercy. Get the brand ready and let it be red-hot!"

Gerald was as good as his word.

Though the lash cut into his young flesh at every stroke, not a word—not a groan—not even a sigh—escaped his lips; but ah, the fearful vows that were registered in his heart!

When he was lowered from the triangle he could scarcely stand; nor yet while the burning brand was sinking into his back, there to leave the big "D" forever, he did not quail.

"I never saw such courage—such pluck!" muttered one soldier to another. "God help the colonel and his son if he breaks out of prison—as he's sure to do."

"He'll keep his word," returned the other. "See—the colonel is as pale as death now."

"You're done with me now, Colonel Costello!" cried the dauntless youth, as he was borne away; "but I'm not done with you and your son. Remember what I told you, for I've sworn to God to punish you both for this!"

Ten minutes afterward Colonel Costello and his son were conversing in whispers in the room to which they had retired after dismissing the troops.

"I tell you, Oscar, that he's a dangerous scoundrel, and that they won't keep him six months in prison."

"Can't we manage to get him out of the way altogether, then, father?"

"We must—we must! Our lives are not safe, not to speak of anything else if he escapes. I'll think of some way of getting rid of him, Oscar. By George, but I have it, and I know the man to do it, too!"

"What is it, father?" inquired the young man, eagerly.

"Never mind, now, till I work the plan out. I'll put the scoundrel out of the way, you may reply on it."

One week after, the branded Irish lad was sent to the convict station on Spike Island, Cork harbor, to serve out his sentence.

The determined fellow was not a week in prison before he commenced to work and plot for his liberty.

To be sure, he was encumbered with a heavy ball and chain that he was compelled to drag around with him.

Certain it was that the prison walls were strong, and that armed guards patrolled the shores of the island by night and by day, ready, on the slightest alarm, to shoot down a prisoner who attempted to escape by the water.

But Gerald did not for a moment give up the hope of liberty, and he never ceased to think of the bitter enemies against whom he had sworn a fearful vengeance.

Now and then he would think of the faithful Fannie, of his mother, and of that mysterious old gentleman who had assisted him on the night of the fight.

Three months passed away, and hope grew stronger and stronger in the young lad's breast.

The lad found a friend among the guards, and this friend had furnished him with a small file to cut away the cumbersome ball and chain.

This man was recently appointed to the convict station, and when he was about a month on the island he intimated to Gerald that he was sent there to assist him in escaping.

"'Tis the old stranger who is trying to aid me," thought

Gerald. "I don't like this fellow's looks, but if it was Old Nick himself come to help me I'd take his offer."

Gerald O'Grady, young as he was, was a keen observer; and there was something in the face of the friendly guard that told him to beware of treachery.

And yet the man had supplied him with the file to sever his chain and cut through his prison bars; he had given him intimation of the hour that he would be on duty on a certain night, at a spot on the shore from whence Gerald could swim out to one of the ships in the harbor; and the guard had whispered into his ear that a boat would be on hand to assist him in the escape.

The night had come and Gerald was prepared for action.

All day long he had watched an American ship in the harbor, and he was hoping and praying that she would remain there until night set in.

Down from the prison walls toward the rocky shore a crouching figure stole, and the iron rings were still about his ankles.

"There's the guard and there's the ship I'll make for!" muttered the desperate prisoner as he peered out in the darkness; "but I don't see any boat in the harbor. Boat or no boat, I'll strike for that ship to-night, with God's help!"

And the brave lad pushed on toward the rocks that guarded the shore.

"Now we'll soon see if Tobin stands to me," muttered Gerald as he crept along toward the rocks, while the armed guard was pacing to and fro not twenty yards away.

"I'll soon earn me five hundred pounds," muttered the guard, as he held his gun ready for use and watched the fugitive. "I'll pepper him when he strikes the rocks."

As the treacherous rascal uttered these words he raised his gun and covered the fugitive.

"Who goes there?" he cried, in a loud voice.

"I'm betrayed!" muttered the branded lad as he sprang on the rocks. "By heavens! I'll have a swim for liberty, anyway."

Bang! went the false guard's gun.

The ball whistled by Gerald's head as he sprang on the rocks, and at that moment he stumbled and fell.

"Hurrah!" cried the guard as he drew his bayonet and sprang toward the prostrate lad, "he's down, and I might as well make sure of him with this. 'Twas his life I bargained for."

Gerald heard these words as the guard rushed on him, and then he knew that the vile wretch was hired by his enemies to destroy him.

The desperate lad did not move hand or foot until the man was over him with the gleaming bayonet ready to strike.

"Faith, but he's done for already!" muttered the traitor, as he stared at the pale face before him, "and there's no use in giving him this; but to be sure of it."

The man bent down to lay his hand on his victim's heart, and then the young tiger, seeing his opportunity, sprang at the wretch's throat, as he hissed into his ear:

"You thought to kill me, did you—you villain of the world. There's your reward!"

As the young fellow uttered these words he dragged the bayonet from the astonished man and plunged it into his breast.

"God have mercy on my soul!" gasped the wretch as he fell on the rocks, "but I deserved it."

Still holding the bloody weapon in his hand the desperate lad turned away from the fallen man and cast one glance out on the dark waters.

He could hear the shouts of the other guards as they hastened to the spot, attracted by the report of the gun.

"'Tis death for me to stay here now," muttered Gerald. "I'll take to the water. I'll keep this bayonet, for they'll never

take me alive. May God assist me in reaching that ship beyond!"

And the fearless lad plunged into the sea, while the shouts and cries of the gathering guards told him that he was perceived.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HUNTED LAD ENCOUNTERS OLD FOES.

When Gerald O'Grady plunged from the rocks into the sea his eyes were fixed on the American vessel lying at anchor in the capacious harbor.

The iron rings that fastened the ball and chains to his limbs were still on his ankles, as he did not have time to sever them with the small file, but he struck out right bravely from the shore, muttering the while:

"I paid that villain for his treachery, at all events, no matter what comes. Only to think that they should hire him to kill me. That shows how much they fear me; and well they might. If I can only manage to escape this night, by the God that's seeing us all, but they'll feel my vengeance, too!"

As the determined lad uttered these words he grasped the bayonet with a firm grip, and struck out into the tide.

And now the alarm rang out in dead earnest from the island.

Gerald could hear the shouts and cries of those who had found the treacherous guard.

He could hear the bells ringing, the minute-gun booming, while over the water flashed the warning signals to the men-of-war in the harbor, announcing that a prisoner had escaped.

Another glance forward at the American vessel and Gerald muttered:

"The tide is bearing me out; I can never be able to reach her!"

Then he glanced back at the island and that one look was enough to strike terror to the bravest heart at such a time.

"They're putting out with the boats and lights," he muttered. "If they see me I have only to fight to the last for it, for I'll never be taken alive. I'll strike out for that big ship below."

Gerald was a splendid swimmer, and he moved through the water at a rapid rate, without either making a great deal of commotion or exposing more than his head above the surface.

He did not attempt to gain the opposite shore, for the reason that, as he was well aware, it would be impossible to reach the land while the tide was setting out with a strong current.

His only hope of salvation was to strike one of the American vessels lying at Queenstown, and then to either slip on board and hide until they were out at sea or throw himself on the mercy of the officers and crew.

Gerald O'Grady had great faith in the generosity of the American seamen, and feeling that he had committed no crime that would debar him from the sympathy of honest men, he had strong hopes that the strangers would strain a point in saving an unfortunate lad from life-long imprisonment or death.

The struggling lad had proceeded more than a mile from the convict island, when he saw a large vessel at anchor, some distance ahead, while on looking back again he could perceive a boat pushing after him at a rapid pace.

"God send this is a Yankee ship!" he muttered, as he endeavored to distinguish the colors flying at the vessel's stern. "If it isn't, I'm gone, for that boat is after me without a doubt."

The boat was making for the ship, but, thanks to the darkness, its occupants had not yet noticed the fugitive in the water.

Pushing on for dear life, Gerald managed to reach the ship and seize the anchor chain, just as the boat swept up alongside.

"What ship is that?" demanded the officer in charge of the boat.

"Her Majesty's transport, Shannon, with troops for the Crimea," was the reply from the ship. "What alarm is that from Spike Island?"

"A noted convict has escaped, after stabbing one of the guards. It is thought that he will make for one of the vessels in the harbor. Please to keep a sharp lookout for him, captain."

"What was the convict's name?" demanded a loud, stern voice from the ship.

Gerald heard that voice while clinging to the anchor chain, and his heart beat the faster, while he grasped the bayonet, as he muttered:

"By the God above us, 'tis Colonel Costello. Ha! you villain, if I could only get near enough to sink this into your heart."

"Gerald O'Grady," replied the officer in the boat. "He was a deserter from the army, and a convicted thief. He is a desperate young villain!"

"I know the rascal," said Colonel Costello, as he gnashed his teeth with rage, "and he must not escape. He nearly murdered my son before he deserted from the regiment. What was the name of the guard he stabbed, officer?"

"Tobin, sir. A new man. He was not quite dead when we put off, but he can't live till morning."

"Death and furies!" roared Colonel Costello, "the fiend must not escape. Oscar, order up a file of men! Captain Mitchel, I beg that you will place a boat at our disposal. This infernal wretch has sworn to kill me, and I must hunt him down. We will search every vessel in the harbor for the scoundrel!"

"Certainly, colonel," responded the captain of the transport. "All the boats are at your service."

"Away, officer!" cried the enraged colonel to the man in charge of the island boat. "Look to foreign vessels in the harbor. The wretch won't venture near one of ours. A hundred pounds to you from me if you take the rascal, dead or alive."

"We will do our best, sir," responded the officer. "The fellow can't escape. Give way, men, to that Yankee ship up the harbor."

"Aha!" muttered Gerald, "the villain and his son are going out after me in a boat. So they're going off to the war at last; and they waited to make sure I was dead before they went. If I only had a revolver now I'd bang it at them as they get into the boat. I wonder if Fannie is going out with them?"

At that moment a well-known voice on the ship answered this question.

"Oh, father—Oscar!" was the plaintive appeal, "you have punished the poor fellow enough already. Have some mercy on him!"

"The scoundrel must die, girl!" cried Colonel Costello. "Go below, I say! This is no place for you. Go down to your stateroom!"

And Colonel Costello hastened down the rope ladder to the boat, followed by his son and the soldiers.

"God bless you, my darling Fannie!" muttered the hunted lad. "I'd give my right hand to see you and speak to you this minute. God's curses on your father and brother! and I'm going to risk my life to finish them this night."

And the desperate young fellow proceeded to put into execution a plan he had suddenly conceived for the destruction of his enemies.

Colonel Costello and his son were seated in the stern of the boat as it moved on through the harbor toward the American vessel.

"Oscar," said the father, "if this young scoundrel escapes to-night he will attempt to assassinate us. I can never forget his look of hatred that day when he was flogged. If we catch him to-night, we must kill him."

"He'll get no mercy from me, father. And to think that he has escaped from Tobin, after——"

"Hush, Oscar! As it stands now I hope he has killed that fellow. Oh, he's a daring young scoundrel, to escape while that man watched him. You heard the shot from the island. Tobin must have fired on him as he promised."

"That I did, Colonel Costello!" moaned a low, ghostly voice from the water. "And I charge ye to give the five hundred pounds to me poor widder and childer."

"Great heavens, Oscar!" gasped the colonel, as he seized his son by the arm. "Did you hear that?"

Oscar Costello trembled in every limb as he gasped forth the reply:

"'Tis Tobin's ghost, father. Promise him to give the money. He must be dead now."

"Dead and lost!" moaned the low voice from under the stern of the boat, "and all because I tried to do your dirty work and murder that poor lad. Why did ye timpt me, ye villain? What good is all the money ye promised me now? But give it to the widder and childer or I'll haunt ye forever!"

"We will—we will!" gasped Colonel Costello as he bent over the stern of the boat. "For God's sake, if you are Tobin's ghost, don't speak so loud and I'll double the amount."

"Swear to it!" returned the ghostly voice. "Swear that ye'll give me widder a thousand pounds for my trying to kill Gerald O'Grady, or I'll sink the boat this minnit, as sure as I'm burning in the pit below! Swear it on the bayonet he struck me with, or I'll send ye all down where I am this minnit!"

At that moment the bright steel was raised above the water and father and son grew pale with fear as they saw the white hand that held it.

"Kiss the bloody weapon," continued the low, solemn voice, "and swear that ye'll give the money to those that's left behind! Swear it, the pair of ye, or I'll sink the weapon into yer false hearts!"

"Oh, this is terrible, Oscar!" gasped the father, as the perspiration rolled off his haggard face, while he stared at the gleaming weapon in the white hand. "I cannot kiss that bayonet."

"Let us put back to the ship, father!" gasped the terrified young man.

"What's wrong, colonel?" inquired one of the sailors, working the boat, who had overheard the son's suggestion to put back to the ship.

"I'll sink the boat afore two minnits," said the ghost, "if ye don't do my bidding. Bend down, the pair of ye, and swear on the bayonet!"

"There's nothing wrong, sailor," faltered Oscar, "only my father does not feel very well. Bend down and appease the ghost, father."

The last sentence was uttered in a very low voice.

"Yes—yes, Oscar!" faltered the father as he bent down over the stern. "Kiss it with me."

Father and son bent down their heads over the stern to kiss the weapon, while the ghostly voice answered:

"Make haste, for the cock will soon crow and I must be back to the fiery pit. Oh, curses on ye that timpted me to betray that brave lad. Treacherous hound, take that!"

Colonel Costello uttered a cry of agony as he sprang up in the boat with the blood flowing from a wound in his mouth.

At the same moment his son was seized by the throat and dragged over the stern of the boat, while a vigorous arm plunged the weapon into his side.

"Murder—treachery!" spluttered the colonel as he spat the

blood from his mouth. "My son—my son! He's murdered by a fiend!"

"Father—father, save me!" yelled Oscar Costello, as he struggled in the water. "I'm stabbed in the side! Oh, God! I can't hold up."

A wild, unearthly cry burst from the water under the boat, and then a ghostly voice rang out:

"Colonel Costello, remember Gerald O'Grady's oath, for the brand is burning still! You hired a murderer to kill him this night, and your tool is lying low on Spike Island. Hear your son's cries for mercy now. Soldiers, sailors, Colonel Costello and his son are vile murderers. Go to sea with them and you'll perish in the ocean!"

"Villain—liar!" cried Colonel Costello, as he drew his pistol and stared over the side of the boat, "I know you now. Back, men, and save my son. The escaped convict is under the boat and he has attempted to murder us. Back—back! My son must not perish!"

"Down—down you'll go, men, if you stir back an inch to save him!" yelled the dauntless, desperate Gerald from under the boat.

"Save me, father—save me!" yelled the wounded man in the water.

The surprised and superstitious sailors were dumfounded, and did not know what to do, while some of the soldiers, who were Gerald's old comrades, recognized his voice, and realized that the desperate lad had made a determined attempt to be revenged on his persistent and cruel tormentors.

The soldiers in the boat knew that it was the branded lad, who had succeeded in breaking away from his jailers on the island; and they readily surmised why it was that the colonel and his son were so anxious to effect his capture.

The soldiers' sympathies were with their old comrade, for they felt that he had been cruelly wronged and brutally punished; and they made no effort to discover his whereabouts or to arrest him.

The sailors in the boat could not comprehend the strange scene no more than they could surmise where the mysterious voice came from; and their superstitious fears were aroused by the ominous words that arose from the water.

The agonized father saw that his son would sink very soon; and though bleeding fearfully his energies were soon fully aroused.

Pointing his revolver at the sailor near him he called out in a fierce voice:

"Pull back and save my son, or by the God above us I will send a bullet through your head! Soldiers, I command you to watch the side of the boat and shoot the scoundrel the moment you see him."

At this fierce command the sailors plied their oars and forced the boat back to where the wounded man was struggling in the water.

The soldiers dragged their wounded officer on board the boat, and he fell senseless in the stern, while the father raved forth:

"My son is dead! Look for the murderer! Five hundred pounds to the man that kills him! Oscar! Oscar! are you living, my son?"

And the frantic man, with the blood flowing from the deep gash in his mouth, fell beside his son.

"Back to the vessel!" cried the sergeant in command of the man. "Back at once or they'll both be dead on our hands. Gerald O'Grady, wherever you are you have paid them back dearly to-night."

And Gerald O'Grady, still retaining the bayonet in his hand, was at that moment swimming silently toward the American vessel which he had been watching all day.

The tide was now running in and the boat was not half a mile from the American vessel when Gerald so boldly assaulted his enemies.

The transport Shannon sailed for the Crimea next morning, but Colonel Costello and his son did not accompany their regiment, for they were invalids at the military hospital in the city of Cork.

Gerald O'Grady was not captured, although the authorities searched every vessel leaving the harbor, while the police on shore hunted for him in town and city and country.

Three days after, Colonel Costello received through mail the following letter:

"COLONEL COSTELLO—When this reaches you I will be on my way to America. I will return again, with the brand on my back and vengeance in my heart. Remember my oath, for so surely as I braved you in the harbor the other night, so certain will you and your son yet feel the brand and the lash.

"GERALD O'GRADY."

When the enraged man flung this note on the floor his daughter Fannie picked it up and read it.

The faithful girl was happy to learn that her lover had escaped, but she sighed to think that he was her father's deadly enemy.

CHAPTER V.

GERALD WANTS TO JOIN UNCLE SAM'S ARMY.

Four months have passed away and the scene shifts to another land.

It was a cold evening in early spring, more than twenty years ago, when a young lad stood at the Battery and gazed out at the waters of the bay.

His clothes were tattered and torn; the old felt hat that covered his head was minus the brim at the back, and his toes were peeping out of the miserable shoes that were fastened to his feet by coarse strings.

"God be with old Ireland!" muttered the lad, "for all I suffered my own share there. Oh, will I ever be able to go back again to meet the scoundrels that wronged me so sorely? Will I ever see my darling Fannie again? Ah, here comes the man I want to see most, now. I must try my fortune with him."

At that moment a man in the United States uniform was hurrying down the path toward the boat landing.

"I ask your pardon, sergeant," said the Irish lad, "but would you be pleased to tell me if you want any more soldiers, and how a poor fellow might join?"

"Aha! you want to 'list?" replied the stalwart soldier as he cast a critical eye on the aspirant. "Want to go sojering, eh? Well, faith, I think ye're a likely lad for the work."

"I do want to 'list, sergeant; and I'd bless you if you put me in the way of doing it."

"Bedad, but that's aisy enough. Meet me here in the morning at nine and I'll soon fix ye. What's yer name, and where do you come from?"

The Irish lad hesitated a moment before replying to this question.

"My name is—is—Mike Brady," was the stammering reply, "and I come from Ireland."

"Tut—tut, man!" cried the sergeant, "don't be trying to humbug me. That's not yer name. What are ye ashamed or afraid of? I can see at once be yer cut that ye're a deserter from the English army. What's that to me, who give them leg-bail meself. If that's all the harm ye did ye can hold up yer head like a man. I'll meet ye here in the morning."

Then the sergeant moved toward the landing and the next

moment he wheeled around, put his hand in his pocket and offered a silver dollar to the new recruit, saying:

"Maybe ye're not troubled with lashings of money. Take that and welcome."

"I've got enough, thank you, sergeant," replied the lad, refusing the money.

"Sure ye can pay me again," persisted the generous soldier. "Tut, tut, man; take it, and don't be so proud."

"I may never meet you again, sergeant."

"And if ye don't, what odds? Take it, and get some supper and a lodging. 'Tis many a good man's case to be short, now and then."

"God bless you, sergeant!" muttered the destitute lad as he accepted the money. "Won't you give me your name?"

"Burke—Sergeant Burke, me lad. There, now, be off with you. Bedad, but I see ye have the good stuff in ye!"

"Good night, sergeant!" said the Irish lad. "I'll never forget your face or your name."

And Gerald O'Grady turned away to hide the tears that welled up into his eyes, while the impulsive sergeant proceeded to the barge office.

"Look at me now, crying like a child!" muttered the branded Irish lad, "when all that the hounds on the other side could do didn't bring a tear from me. Heigh-ho! so I'm compelled to enter the American army. Well, well, 'twill be only a few years, and then I'll have money to go back and fight the scoundrels that wronged me."

"You will never enter the American army, Gerald O'Grady," said a harsh voice behind him, "for you are my prisoner!"

Quick as a flash the Irish lad turned to face the speaker.

Standing before him, with a revolver in one hand and a pair of handcuffs in the other, was a stout man, whose face was covered with bushy red whiskers, and whose villainous eyes peered out from under eyebrows of the same color.

The man held the revolver pointed full at Gerald's head, and there was a malignant gleam in his eyes as he continued:

"I've been looking for ye this month past, me young buck. Don't ye know me?"

"'Tis Tobin, as I live!" gasped Gerald, as he stared at the treacherous man he had wounded on Spike Island.

"Aye, Tobin!" returned the man, with a malicious grin. "Ye thought ye finished me that night when ye played me ghost. Don't attempt any of yer didoes, now, or I'll blow yer brains out!"

"I surrender," said Gerald, in a sad voice. "I'd just as leave go back to the island, for I'm sick and tired of wandering here. Don't mind the handcuffs, for I'll go quietly with—take that, you treacherous hound—and that!"

And Gerald, with a lightning-like movement, dashed the pistol aside and then struck the man in the face with all his might.

The strong man went down under the blow, and before he could offer resistance Gerald had dragged the revolver from his grasp, striking him in the face with the weapon at the same time.

"Now, you infernal scoundrel!" cried the lad, as he looked around on the deserted walks, "I've a good mind to kill you at once. Ha! ha! you thought to take me prisoner, did you? One would suppose you got enough that night on the island. One word out of you and you're a dead man!"

And Gerald held the revolver to the baffled man's head, while he tore the handcuffs from his grasp.

"Murder me if ye like, Gerald O'Grady," gasped Tobin as he glared up at his foe, "but I won't cry for mercy. I could have killed ye a moment ago, and no one would blame me for it, only I hadn't the heart to fire at ye."

"Lying hound!" cried Gerald, "didn't you fire on me that night on Spike Island? Oh, God, how do I keep my fingers still when I think of your treachery, and you engaged to help me?"

Tell me, you scoundrel—isn't Colonel Costello hounding you on me now?"

"Ye can swear to that," replied Tobin. "They're bent on having your life!"

"Then you deserve death for helping them, you dirty dog!" cried Gerald. "And yet I cannot take your life in cold blood, bad as you are. I'll spare you this time, but if you ever cross me again I'll kill you as I would a serpent, you mean hound!"

And Gerald struck the fallen man across the face with his open hand.

"Curse ye for that blow, Gerald O'Grady!" hissed the man. "I'll never forgive ye!"

"I don't want your forgiveness, Tobin; but I do want you, if you don't want your blood on my hands to-night, to let me go in peace. Offer to follow me—raise a cry against me and you are a dead man; beware, you scoundrel, for I'm in deadly earnest."

And Gerald left the baffled and enraged man lying on the ground as he walked swiftly away from the spot.

The hunted lad hurried out of the Battery and into West Street, without paying any attention to the tall, gray-haired man who was following him.

It was growing quite dusk as Gerald walked along, while he gave vent to his feelings as follows:

"So, they're after me again. They've sent that villain out here to drag me back. I'm afraid I'll have to kill him, and I don't want any blood on my hands but theirs. Oh, if they were only here!"

"They are here, Gerald O'Grady!" said a voice at his side.

"And who are you?" demanded the hunted lad as he drew Tobin's weapon and turned to face the speaker.

In the dim light Gerald saw the figure of the tall, gray-haired man who had befriended him on the night of the struggle on the banks of the Irish river.

"As I told you before, as I tell you again, Gerald O'Grady," was the old stranger's earnest reply, "I am your true friend."

"Friend!" sneered the lad. "I have no friend in this wide world. If you were my friend, why didn't you come near me in all my trouble?"

"As God is my judge this night," was the old man's earnest answer, "I had to fly for my own life that night, as the bloodhounds in Ireland were on my track, hard and fast. 'Twas only when I got out here to this country that I heard of your trouble. Oh, God knows that I would wade through blood and fire to save you from your enemies, lad!"

"That's all very fine talk," said the suspicious Gerald, impatiently.

"Hear me out, foolish lad," said the old man, in his earnest way. "I told you that night on the banks of the Bandon that I was your friend; and that I would help you to crush your enemies, and your mother's enemies. I was making arrangements to go back to Ireland, though my life was at stake, to aid you in getting clear from Spike Island, when I heard of your daring escape, my lad."

"Who are you, at all?" demanded the lad as he stared at the mysterious old stranger.

"Who and what I am is of no consequence to you so long as I prove that I am able and willing to help you to right yourself and punish those who wronged you. Put that weapon in your pocket and then come with me, Gerald."

"I won't budge a step with you till you tell me who you are. How can I trust any one after the treachery I met with?"

"Gerald O'Grady," said the old man as he pressed the lad's hand and looked earnestly into his bright eyes while he spoke, "your father was my best friend. We were transported together for taking part in the rebellion in Ireland. I am an outlaw, with a price set on my head. Don't ask me my name, for if it was ever whispered in New York your enemies and

mine would triumph over us. Believe me, I tell you the truth."

"What will I call you, then, sir?" inquired Gerald, who was attracted to the mysterious old stranger.

"Call me Collier—Maurice Collier. When we have conquered your enemies, when we crush them to the earth and you are restored to your rights, then you will know my right name, Gerald O'Grady."

"How will we do it, sir?"

"Your mother is alive yet, Gerald, and we must find her. Colonel Costello, with his son and daughter, are here in New York now, and they have set that rascal, Tobin, on you. We must turn on them and give them a terrible punishment."

"I am with you sir, heart and soul," said Gerald, as he pressed the old man's hand. "There's something whispering to me that you are true. I'll trust you."

"There's only one thing that makes me fear for you, Gerald."

"What is that, sir?"

"You think too much of the young girl, and I'm afraid that you will forget your vengeance for her sake, my lad."

A bitter smile passed over Gerald's face, as he replied:

"Can I ever forget the disgraceful lash and the burning brand, sir? Can I drive from my mind the cruel jeers and taunts they flung at me when they couldn't force a tear from me?"

"My poor fellow, how you must have suffered from them. But we will work together for vengeance, Gerald!"

"Aye, if you were the Old Boy himself."

"I am your friend, Gerald, whatever crimes may be laid at my door. Now, for some supper and a change of clothes."

"I want them both badly," laughed Gerald. "And I can pay back Sergeant Burke in the morning. I must get up a disguise, sir."

"I'll fix you so that your own mother won't know you. No—not even the girl that loves you, as you will see."

"Faith, but 'twould be a good joke to try it," laughed the buoyant lad. "And by St. Patrick, but you make me feel like a new man already."

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONSPIRATORS IN COUNCIL.

"Tobin, you're a smart coward. To think that the fellow should escape from you, and he unarmed, while you had your revolver. Why didn't you shoot him as you would a dog?"

"I couldn't, sir. I thought I had him sure, when he turned on me like winking, and——"

"Gave you a pair of black eyes, took away your pistol and handcuffs, and almost frightened the life out of you," interrupted Colonel Costello, in a fearful rage. "Oh, you're a pretty fellow to cope with this young desperado—you are!"

"Come—come, father," interposed Oscar Costello, "you must not be too severe with Tobin. You must remember what this young devil did to ourselves. And you say he looks like a beggar, Tobin, and that he is going to enlist in the American army?"

"He's to meet the sergeant to-morrow morning down there, Master Oscar; and I think we'll be able to pin him there for sure, or kill him."

"We must kill him!" said Colonel Costello, in a voice that was hoarse with passion. "If the young fiend finds his mother we are lost, beggared, ruined, disgraced forever."

And the excited man sprang to his feet and walked the floor with hasty strides.

The three conspirators were conversing in a private room

at a fashionable boarding house on Bleeker Street, in the city of New York, about two hours after Tobin had encountered Gerald O'Grady at the Battery.

When Colonel Costello and his son recovered from the severe wounds inflicted by the desperate lad in the encounter in the harbor, Sebastopol had been captured and peace was declared between Russia and the allied forces.

Burning with vengeance, and fully determined to crush the brave lad who had defied them, father and son retired from the army and then set out for America in search of their enemy.

"Disgraced—ruined, father!" repeated Oscar Costello, as he watched the agitated man. "I'm sure, sir, I never thought it was as bad as that."

"It is, Oscar!" hissed the colonel. "If this young viper finds his mother before we succeed in forcing her to give up the papers and to swear that she was never married to his father, you and Fannie will be beggared and I will be disgraced forever."

A fiendish smile passed over Tobin's face as he listened to this avowal.

"There's a way of forcing her, sir," he remarked, in a quiet way, "if ye'd be only said be me."

"Forcing her!" said Colonel Costello. "Haven't we tried everything but killing her outright to make her do as I want? We've starved her, threatened her, kept her in a dark hole for over a year, and she won't surrender. Curse the woman! Curse her son! There's no way but by killing the pair of them!"

"I'll never consent to that, father," said Oscar. "I want to see Gerald crushed, but, by George! I can't consent to the killing of that poor woman."

"There's no occasion to kill her if ye take my advice," said Tobin. "I'm sure I've hit on a plan for making her do as ye want, and at the same time giving the young fellow what he deserves."

"What is it, Tobin?" inquired Colonel Costello. "Your fortune is made if you show us a way to make that woman do as we require; but, by heavens, her son must die at all hazards!"

"To-morrow morning, sir," commenced Tobin, "he'll be down there again to meet the soldier. We must be there to grab him and whip him off, or kill him if he shows fight, for we have the law on our side; but I wouldn't advise killing him just yet."

"What will we do with him, then?" inquired the young man. "Take him out to where we've got the mother in hiding, and let him see her. Then kill him before her eyes if she don't do what ye want."

"By George! Tobin, you're a cunning dog!" said Oscar. "And it can be worked. What do you think of it, father?"

"I'm afraid to let the young scoundrel know where his mother is," replied the colonel. "Remember that her brother has escaped from Australia, and he may be out here in America now. I fear him more than I do this young fiend, for he is a daring, bold ruffian. Why, you know he was in Ireland at the very time that the young dog was punished, and the were on his track. If he should meet Gerald O'Grady—"

"He has met him, villains!" rang out a stern voice outside the door.

"Great God! Who is that?" cried Colonel Costello as he sprang toward the door. "Some scoundrel is outside here. Quick, Tobin—Oscar—your pistols!"

Colonel Costello waited at the door until his son handed him a revolver, and then he sprang out into the hall, followed by the others.

"Good evening, colonel!" cried an old gentleman who was ascending the stairs from the lower hall. "Why, what is the matter? Been attacked by burglars?"

"Some villain has been listening at my door, Mr. Collier," returned the excited man. "Did you meet any one in the lower hall?"

"Not a soul, colonel. By the way, I want to tell you that my nephew has arrived from Ireland. Will have the pleasure of presenting him to you all to-morrow evening. He's stopping with some friends in Brooklyn to-night. You do look annoyed, colonel."

"Come in, father," whispered Oscar. "Good night Mr. Collier. Excuse father. He's a little annoyed."

"Aye, faith," muttered the old stranger, as a grim smile passed over his face while he sought his own room, "'tis me'll annoy you, and trouble you, and crush you before long, you scoundrels!"

The old stranger was a regular boarder in that house, and he was on intimate terms with Colonel Costello and his children.

And 'tis little the conspirators thought that the mild-mannered old gent was their bold, relentless enemy.

CHAPTER VII.

SERGEANT BURKE ENCOUNTERS AN OLD TYRANT.

Sergeant Burke was on hand at the Battery on the following morning at nine o'clock, and he waited impatiently for some time, cursing the new recruit for not appearing at the hour appointed.

It was a cold, raw morning, and the stalwart soldier strode up and down the patch, watching the few visitors who ventured to face the cutting wind that swept up from the bay, while he kept muttering:

"The devil fire that blackguard for humbugging me in this way. I don't care so much for the dollar, but the lads will have the laugh on me when I go back without me new recruit. Begor, but I'll never trust the likes of him again, for all he had an honest face, bad scan to the deceiving villain—"

"Can I have a few words with you, sergeant?"

The soldier turned around to encounter a tall, soldierly looking man of advanced years, who had approached him.

"A dozen if you like, sir," replied the sergeant, as he bent his keen eyes on the stranger.

"You are waiting here for a fellow who promised to enlist, are you not?"

"Faith, but I am, sir. And 'tis cursing him I was for humbugging me," replied Sergeant Burke. "But might I be so bold as to be asking ye what concern is that of yours, sir?"

And the keen-eyed soldier bent another penetrating glance at the stranger.

"The scoundrel you're looking for is branded a deserter, a convicted felon, a ruffian who deserves death, for he attempted to murder three men in Ireland. I am engaged in hunting him down. If you will assist us, sergeant, I'll give you a hundred dollars."

The sergeant looked the tempter full in the face as he inquired:

"And what may be your name, sir?"

"I am Colonel Costello, late in her majesty's service, and this young wretch is known as Gerald O'Grady."

"And you want me to hunt him down, do ye? You want me to play the informer and spy on a poor devil who's hiding for his life, Colonel Costello, ye black-hearted ould villain!"

"What do you mean, you scoundrel?" cried the insulted man as he sprang back and raised his walking-stick to strike the indignant soldier.

"What do I mane, is it? I called ye a black-hearted ould

villain, and I didn't call ye out of yer name. Be the Howly Power, if ye offer to touch me with that stick I'll murder ye! Ha! ha! 'tisn't in the Cork barracks ye are now, ye ould tyrant, ye dirty upstart! Aha! 'tis many a long day I wanted to face ye, and to tell ye what every honest man in the regiment thought of ye!"

"You impudent scoundrel!" cried the enraged colonel. "How dare you insult me? I'll flog you where you stand, you cur! Take that!"

The angry man aimed a blow at the sergeant; but before the stick descended the active fellow caught it with his right hand and wrenched it from his assailant's grasp, while at the same moment he let fly with his left and sent the colonel to the ground.

"That's how I serve ye in a free land, ye ould tyrant!" cried Ned Burke, as he broke the stick on his knee, and flung the pieces into the water; "and if it wasn't that I despise to bate one like ye, I'd kick ye through the Battery like I would a football. Oh, but——"

"Scoundrel!" yelled Oscar Costello as he rushed down the path to his father's assistance, followed by the burly Tobin. "How dare you strike my father? Let's fling him into the water, Tobin."

"Ye will—will ye?" cried Ned Burke as he squared off for his new assailants. "Begor, but I'm glad to face a son of the ould tyrant; and I'm able to bate the whole of ye! Take that, me young buck! Now, ye foxy thief, I'll tend to ye!"

As the soldier uttered these words he dealt Oscar Costello a stinging blow on the nose that sent him to the ground, and then he turned on Tobin.

"Pound the life out of the scoundrel, Tobin!" cried Colonel Costello, as he sprang to his feet and made for the sergeant. "Don't spare him!"

Tobin was a stout, able man, and he knew how to handle his fists.

When Sergeant Burke let fly at him he parried the blow like a veteran boxer and then he sent a staggerer in on the soldier's face that sent him reeling backward.

At that moment Colonel Costello struck Burke another blow on the side of the head, while Oscar, who had regained his feet, was also dashing in on him with upraised hands.

"Three to one!" yelled the sergeant, as he struck out, right and left at his assailants. "Heavens alive! but I'll whale the whole of ye if ye face me like men, ye cowardly dogs! Ha! ye foxy thief, take that! Take that, ye spawn of the ould boy! Ye treacherous ould scoundrel, 'tis like ye to strike from behind; but I'll not spare ye now!"

And as the active fellow rattled away with his tongue he sprang from one to the other, dealing fierce blows and re-receiving those of his three assailants at the same time.

"Three to one!" cried a manly voice. "By Jove! we never stood that in Dublin. Here goes for a little manly exercise. Fair play—fair play!"

And an active young man, with black whiskers and eyeglasses, dressed in the height of fashion, took his stand beside Ned Burke and faced Oscar Costello.

One blow straight from the shoulder, and Ned Burke had but two assailants to deal with.

"Glory to ye, me bold fellow!" cried the excited soldier as he sprang on Tobin. "And now, me foxy thief, I'll polish ye off!"

"By George, old gentleman!" cried the young stranger as the enraged colonel rushed on him, "you'll have to measure the ground with your friend!"

A stunning blow on the ear sent Colonel Costello to the ground beside his son.

"Let us shoot the scoundrels, father!" yelled Oscar, as he drew a revolver.

"No, no, Oscar, we must not get into trouble!" cried the father.

"Sound advice, sir," said the young stranger as he drew a weapon from his breast-pocket. "Two can play at that game. Ha! soldier, you're having it hot and heavy, I see. Let them fight it out, sir, and I'll give you satisfaction after."

Tobin and Ned Burke were fighting away like two scientific pugilists; but it was evident that the stalwart soldier was more than a match for his red-haired antagonist.

The father and son sprang to their feet and they stood glaring at the young stranger for a moment as if undecided whether to pounce on him again or await the issue of the struggle between Tobin and Ned Burke.

At that moment several boatmen came running along the path from the landing, and the foremost sang out, as he recognized the sergeant:

"Want any help there, Sergeant Burke? What's all the row about?"

"Help for what?" cried the sergeant, as he dealt Tobin a powerful blow on the eyes that sent him to the ground. "Be heavens, Collins, 'tis only play to me to wallup a dozen like him. Get up and come at it again, ye foxy rogue!"

"I won't fight any more," grumbled the beaten Tobin.

"Come away, Oscar. Come away, Tobin!" cried Colonel Costello, as he saw the gathering crowd. "This is no place for us. Come away."

"'Tis a good ducking ye all deserve!" yelled Sergeant Burke. "Boys, boys, there's one of the greatest tyrants that ever left ould Ireland, and that young cur is his son. They're out here now after a poor young fellow that escaped from their clutches, and they want to drag him back to murder him. What don't they deserve, I ask ye?"

"Chuck them overboard!" yelled one of the boatmen.

"Douse them—douse them!" cried another.

"Come away—come away!" cried Colonel Costello, as he retreated before the angry boatmen.

Oscar glared at the sergeant as he cried:

"You contemptible hound, if you touch one of us again I'll shoot you as I would a dog!"

"Hold on there, sergeant!" cried the boatman addressed as Collins. "Here comes the police, and you'll only be getting into trouble. Let them go; and slip out there by West Street, yourself, if you don't want to be locked up. Go away, sirs, I advise you. Hold back there, boys, and don't interfere."

Colonel Costello and his son, with the beaten Tobin, scowled fiercely on Sergeant Burke as they turned and walked up toward Bowling Green, where a carriage was in waiting for them.

Sergeant Burke shook his clenched fist at his late assailants as he cried out:

"That's only a taste of what ye'll get, ye villains of the world, if I ever run across ye again! The curse of the cross be with ye wherever ye go. And where's the strapping lad that give me a hand?"

The sergeant turned to look for the young stranger with the glasses and saw him sauntering up the path toward West Street.

"Bedad, but I must ask him to take a trate, anyway, for he stood to me like a man. I wonder if that blackguard of a recruit will ever turn up. Faith, but 'tis a fine ruction I had about him, anyway. Only to think that I should run across the ould tyrant of a colonel and his son."

And the sergeant ran after the young stranger as fast as his legs could carry him.

"Hould on there, me brave fellow," he said as he caught up with the young stranger. "D'ye suppose Ned Burke is going to let ye off that way?"

"Ha! by Jove!" drawled the stranger. "Then you're the very person I was looking for."

"How is that, sir?" inquired the sergeant as he stared at

black-whiskered dandy who had befriended him so effectually.

"You were—ah—looking for a recruit this morning, sergeant, believe?"

"Bedad, I was, sir. But what's that got to do with you? You must come and take a drink with me, and 'tis my blessing you'll have for standing to me as you did."

"Pooh, sergeant, that was only a little exercise. By George! I enjoy that kind of thing. You box pretty well, sergeant, eh?"

"Pretty well—is it?" laughed the sergeant. "Begor, but I know Yankee Sullivan—and ye heard of him, of course—says he'll make me fit to face any man in the country. But ye mentioned a new recruit. D'ye know what became of the lying blackguard? And do ye know that them same devils is after him?" "Your new recruit is not a lying blackguard, sergeant," replied the dandified stranger, "and he's a friend of mine, you know. I came here to take his place, if you are willing to accept me."

"Get out of that with ye!" cried the soldier. "Is it to make me ashamed of me that ye're up to? Be heavens, for all ye give me a chance against them villains, I'd break every bone in yer body to come any of yer didoes over me. Ye go for a soldier!"

"By George! sergeant," drawled the young dandy, "you will not provoke me into giving you a good thrashing."

"Give me a what? Be the powers of Moll Kelly, but I'll show yer face this minnit!"

"You're not able, sergeant," said the young exquisite, in a calm way. "'Tis a pity we're not in some quiet place, for I do need a little more exercise this morning. I would like to give you a lesson, sergeant."

"That's that ye say? Holy Moses, but ye must be out of your mind to offer to be up and down with, ye Dublin Jackeen!"

"I'd bate ye within an inch of yer life while ye'd be bating yerself!"

"We could only find some quiet place," responded the young dandy, "and put on the hard gloves with me, 'pon me, and you would put me under a great obligation, for I have had a row since I left Dublin. On the honor of an Irish gentleman, sergeant, I will give you the prettiest pair of black gloves you ever saw in your life."

These words were uttered in an easy, off-hand manner, and there was not the least show of bravado about the young

sergeant, on the other hand, was a fearful rage.

"On the honor of an Irish soldier," he cried, "I'll give ye a dressing that yer own mother won't know ye, ye Dublin Jackeen! Don't say another word now, or I'll jump at ye here."

"With me and if I don't give ye exercise enough, put Ned Burke down for a big blower and a liar in the bargain."

"At the moment, sergeant," said the smiling dandy, "I want to make you a proposition."

"What is it? Quick, for I'm tearing mad to be at ye, ye young buck."

"I want a recruit this morning?"

"Be sure, I do. But what's that to do with our boxing?"

"A good deal, sergeant. If you thrash me with the gloves I'll be a man."

"Eh, begor, I'm certain of me man. Come on, till I see ye off."

"If I should happen to give you a drubbing, sergeant, what will you do for me?"

"For ye? Ha! ha! ha! but you're a droll lad, after all. If ye bate me with the fists or gloves I'd be willing to that I'd be yer born slave forever after."

"Is a bargain, sergeant. I'll take you at your word. When shall we time up in the army?"

"The day after to-morrow; but I thought of enlisting for

another term. Don't be making me wild, but come and take the beating."

"Wait till we shake hands on the bargain, sergeant," said the young dandy, earnestly. "If you beat me with the fists or gloves I promise and swear to enlist in your company. If I should happen to beat you, you swear to follow me and do my bidding. Is it a bargain?"

"Begor, but it is; and it's the queerest bargain I ever heard of. There's me hand and word on it, though I can't make out what ye're up to. Come on now, and we'll settle it at Yankee Sullivan's."

"By George!" said the young dandy; "but I do feel the blood circulating more freely now. Sergeant, you are a God-send; head on to the field of battle!"

CHAPTER VIII.

A LESSON IN BOXING.

Fifteen minutes after, a cab pulled up at Yankee Sullivan's house on Chatham Street and the young dandy with the glasses, and Ned Burke, sprang down and entered the place.

"How are you, sergeant—and how's every inch of you?" inquired an active man of forty, whose battered face told of many desperate encounters.

"Tip-top, Yankee!" replied Ned Burke. "This is a friend of mine. Can I have a private word with you?"

"Certainly, Ned. Come this way."

And the famous pugilist led the way into the back room where Sergeant Burke, in a few words, explained the object of their visit.

"So you want a quiet set-to, eh?" inquired the veteran boxer as he cast his eye on the stalwart soldier and then on the young dandy. "This youngster is not your match, sergeant. I hope there's no bad blood between you."

"The dickens a bit, Yankee. We want a little innocent diversion only," replied Ned, with a smile.

"The truth is, Mr. Sullivan," said the young dandy, "the sergeant here is going to give me a lesson, and there's a kind of a bet between us. You must be umpire, and see fair play."

And the young fellow, in a few words, explained the strange arrangement entered into.

"A devilish queer bet, sir," said Yankee; "and I can't see what you're driving at. I'm afraid you're no match for Ned here. But you must have fair play, and no mistake. Come on."

And Yankee Sullivan led the way upstairs to a large room, the floor of which was covered with sawdust.

Having locked the door on the inside, and put the key into his pocket, he turned to the soldier, saying:

"Haden't you better try the soft gloves, Ned? You don't want to hurt him?"

"Faith, Yankee, I'd sooner have the hard ones and finish it sooner."

"All the same to me, by Jove!" remarked the young dandy; "only I don't want to kill the sergeant, as I intend that we shall be the best of friends hereafter."

"Bad luck to yer impudence!" cried the soldier as he proceeded to pull off his coat and vest. "I'll give ye an extra dressing for that. The hard gloves, Yankee, by all means."

"As you please, sir. Now for it, sergeant."

"Be heavens!" cried Ned Burke, as he faced his young opponent, "now that I see yer eye, ye 'mind me of the chap last night."

A strange smile passed over the dandy's face, but he did not make a reply.

"Ready!" cried Yankee Sullivan. "Fair play, now, and no striking foul or I'll take a hand in. Set-to!"

To all appearance it was anything but an even match.

Sergeant Burke stood six feet at least; and he was a strong, active man.

Yankee Sullivan, on a former occasion, asserted that the soldier would face any man in the world, providing he had him under training for one year.

The young dandy was about five feet ten inches, and his strength was not fully developed; yet the veteran pugilist could see that his arms were long and sinewy; that his muscles stood out well; and that he had a bold, piercing eye.

"A dangerous customer," muttered Yankee, "if he has the science."

"Look out for your eye, me young buck!" cried the soldier as he made a pass at his opponent. "Begor, that was stopped nicely."

"That wasn't!" cried the dandy as he struck him full on the nose with the hard glove. "First blood for me, Mr. Sullivan."

"I'll murder ye, ye villain!" roared Ned Burke, as he dashed in at his man. "I'll pound ye while I can stand over ye!"

"Look out and keep cool, Ned!" cried Yankee Sullivan. "The youngster is no muff."

The warning came too late.

Rushing in like a mad bull the sergeant let fly right and left.

His active opponent dodged and parried the fierce blows, springing around the room and laughing the while as he sent his gloved hands against the big fellow's eyes, and mouth, and nose.

"Take it easy, I tell you, you big fool!" cried Yankee Sullivan, as he watched the play with the eye of a critic. "Blow me, if you haven't found more than your match, sergeant. Youngster, wherever you took lessons you're a regular stunner. Take it easy, I say, sergeant."

But the angry sergeant couldn't take it easy, for the young dandy was peppering him right and left.

Every blow the sergeant received only served to anger him more and more, as he yelled:

"I'll kill him if I get in on him. He must be the divil himself, Yankee, to bate me this way—the Turk. I must close on him."

And then with a savage yell the infuriated soldier sprang in on his opponent, dashed down his guards by main strength and grabbed him around the waist.

"Now we'll see if ye can wrastle as good as ye can box!" he yelled, "for I'm going to smash yer bones on the floor!"

"None of that, Ned, on your life!" cried Yankee Sullivan. "Don't hurt the youngster. He must have fair play in my house."

"Let us alone, sir," cried the young dandy as he managed to secure a grip on the big sergeant's waist. "A fall or two won't hurt me. Now, sergeant, do your best."

With a powerful effort the strong soldier raised his young opponent from his feet and then attempted to dash him to the floor.

But the young dandy, by an active movement, succeeded in baffling the violent attempt, and landed on his feet.

Before the sergeant could be on his guard he received a sharp kick on the shin, and at the same moment, by a quick and vigorous movement, he was hurled to the floor, his head striking heavily as he fell.

"Completely floored, sergeant!" cried Yankee Sullivan, as he grasped the young dandy's hand. "Who in the name of wonder are you at all, young fellow, and where did you come from?"

"That's what I want to know, be heavens!" cried Sergeant Burke, as he sat on the floor and rubbed his head. "He's the

Ould Boy himself, or some great English or Irish boxer over here to take the starch out of yerself, Yankee."

"I never fought in the ring in my life, and I never returned the young dandy, with a smile. "I am only a y

Irish lad from the city of Cork, out here to seek my fortune. As the young fellow uttered these words he pulled his false whiskers and stood smiling at the doubly astonished sergeant.

"Heavens and earth!" cried the sergeant, "if it isn't a young rascal who offered to 'list with me last evening to murder in Irish!"

"And you must 'list with me now, sergeant," said the young dandy, "unless you want to keep on with the exercise."

"I give in—I give in!" cried the beaten man. "Are you earnest about it?"

"I am in earnest, sergeant. You must keep your word and serve me now according to our bargain, you know. What is not fair, Mr. Sullivan?"

"Fair—fair—of course it was. Sergeant, you must stick to it."

"Begor, then," returned the sergeant, "but I'll stick to it forever and a day. Ye're the first man I've met that's been my master."

"What is your name, sir?" inquired Yankee Sullivan, who had been regarding the bold, handsome young fellow with scrutinizing glances.

"I am called Bernard Collier," replied the young man, as he looked at the pugilist with a fearless eye, "wherever you see me in this rig."

"Is that your real name?" inquired the pugilist, as he watched the young man. "Don't think I want to pry into your secrets; but your face is very familiar to me, young sir. I may be able to do you a good turn yet."

"My real name is Gerald O'Grady, and I know I can do you both," replied the young fellow.

"Great heavens!" cried Sergeant Burke, as he stared at the young manly fellow; "then you're the very lad Colonel Costello is after."

"One moment, sir," said Yankee Sullivan, as he drew Gerald aside, "you can trust me with your life. I read some time of the escape of a young fellow from Spike Island, and of his trying to kill two officers in the harbor."

"I am that young fellow," returned Gerald, boldly.

"I thought so," said Yankee. "About a year ago I was told of the attempted escape of a great convict robber in Australia. He was the terror of the English governor out there for years. They took him at last, and one night, as he attempted to escape from prison with one of his comrades, he was killed."

"That man was my father," said Gerald. "His comrades escaped, and he is here in this city now."

"Do you know who sent your father to transportation? What life, Gerald O'Grady?" inquired Yankee Sullivan, in an eager way.

"I do. I know who robbed me of my fortune, and who branded me a branded convict of me also," hissed the young man.

"I knew your father, Gerald O'Grady," said Yankee, "but you're not his son if you don't get satisfaction."

"That's my mission now, sir," said Gerald. "That's why I want to enlist this brave fellow with me, for I know he is a Colonel Costello also. That's why I adopted this disguise for I wanted to see if he would know me."

"Yer own mother wouldn't know ye!" cried Sergeant Burke, "and yer voice is changed at that. I'm with ye, heart and soul, against that tyrant, Colonel Costello, for I have a grudge to settle with him."

"If you should need another friend, sir," said Yankee Sullivan, "don't forget that I knew your father well, and I am only too willing to help his son against his enemies."

"Thank you, sir. I may call on you. And now for a drink our better acquaintance."

CHAPTER IX.

THE LETTER THAT BREATHED OF VENGEANCE.

More than a week passed away and Colonel Costello could find no trace of the branded lad, though Tobin and his son had spent days and nights in looking for him.

It is night in the boarding house on Bleeker Street, and Colonel Costello is seated at the table in his room, reading a letter, while Tobin is standing near, watching his angry face. "The insolence of the fellow!" cried Colonel Costello as he rang to his feet and dashed the letter on the table. "Tobin, heavens, we're all fools, and this young puppy will baffle yet!"

"What's the trouble now, sir?" inquired Tobin.

"Trouble? Why, Tobin, here's that daring scamp sending me an impudent, threatening letter. 'He's in the city yet, an.'"

"I'll find him before long, then, sir. Never fear, but I'll find him yet."

"That's your cry all the time, Tobin," said Oscar Costello, as he entered the room and closed the door after him; "you are promising that every day. By George! but I think he's gone away. What is the trouble now—what's up?"

"Read that, Oscar. Read what the scoundrel threatens now. Be sure, he's in the city here. See the postmark."

The young man took up the sheet of writing paper and his face flashed with rage as he recognized the writing of his old enemy.

"By George!" he cried, "but it is the scoundrel's writing! What has he to say?"

And the angry young man commenced to read with his single eye, while Tobin and his father stood by and listened:

COLONEL COSTELLO—The time is drawing near for me to place on you and your son, and I give you this timely warning. Before you are both twenty-four hours older I will have you branded and lashed by a hand that will not spare you. I know that you have my mother in your power, but I will release her.

I know that you are plotting for my capture, so as to force me to sign the papers that will rob me of my name and fortune; but I will baffle you in your vile work.

I know now that you disgraced and ruined my poor father, and why you endeavored to hound me to death, you fiends.

Expect no mercy from me for you will not receive any. Every lash that I received I will count two on your backs. The iron that will brand you both will sink deep into your flesh, but it will not sink as deep as the eternal hatred I bear you both.

My eye is on you every day when you least expect it. I see the friends watching you, whom you will never suspect. I see the poor and friendless in Ireland; here I have powerful friends and money to spend in avenging my wrongs. If Tobin persists in hunting me down his blood will be upon his own head.

And now for a last word. When I have succeeded in crushing you both I will marry Fannie. She is an angel. You are a pair of fiends. And I am,

Your bitter enemy,

"GERALD O'GRADY."

"Did you ever hear such insolence?" cried the angry colonel. "Father," said Oscar, as he bent his eye on Tobin, "was he a spy and a traitor in this very house."

"Do ye mean me, sir?" cried Tobin. "I tell ye what it is, I

hate that young villain worse than either of you, and I'm willing to risk my life to put him out of the way; but I won't stand your slurs any longer, Mister Oscar."

"Who is betraying us, then?" demanded the young man.

"Who is the person he mentions there?"

"How can I tell?" replied Tobin. "He may be only saying that to—"

"Oscar," interrupted Colonel Costello, "have you told this new friend of yours—Bernard Collier—anything about our private business?"

"Am I a fool, father?" responded Oscar. "Not that I wouldn't trust him though, for, by George! he's a regular trump, so he is."

"Yes, Oscar," remarked his father, "he seems to hold the trump when playing with you. He has won a great deal of money from you."

"Why, for that matter, father, his uncle seems to serve you in the same way. Mr. Collier beats you every game."

"I'm blessed, gentlemen," said Tobin, "now that you talk of them, I don't like the looks of the uncle and his nephew, at all."

"Pooh—pooh!" said Oscar. "They're both gentlemen, and they have plenty of means. Bernard is the soul of honor. And hang me if I don't think it would be a good idea to get him to help us in hunting down Gerald O'Grady. He's just as smart a fellow as ever I met; and he can fight like a lion."

"Don't think of it, Oscar," said his father. "We must do this work ourselves. By the way, did you notice that this young gentleman is very attentive to Fannie?"

"And a deuced good match 'twould be," laughed Oscar. "The uncle has a splendid estate in Ireland, and he will come in for it. You know Fannie was soft on that young cur. If we could get her to marry Bernard Collier, then there would be no danger of Gerald carrying out his threat."

"I'll speak to Fannie about it," said the colonel. "In the meantime what will we do to force the woman to sign the papers? What will we do to crush this young viper? Tobin, I don't see anything for it but to employ a clever, unscrupulous detective here in New York. We must seize the young wretch."

"I vote that we take Bernard Collier in the boat," said Oscar. "If Gerald O'Grady is to be crushed, he's the man to do it."

"Why not take the uncle in, too, sir?" sneered Tobin.

Oscar was about to reply when a knock at the door attracted their attention.

"Come in!" sang out Colonel Costello.

The door was opened and our dandy with the glasses strode into the room, saying:

"There was a ragged, suspicious-looking young rascal at the door a moment ago, gentlemen, and he asked me if I knew whether you were at home or not."

"By George, 'tis our deserter!" cried Oscar. "Let us all go out and hunt him down."

"If there's to be any excitement I'll join in the chase," said the young dandy. "By Jove! I'm sorry now that I did not detain him. He made off up the street toward Broadway."

"Look to your weapons," said Colonel Costello, "and come with me. This is a great rascal, Mr. Collier, and he's desperate at that. We may have to kill him before we can take him. He has attempted to murder us already."

"I am with you!" said the dandy as he left the room with the others.

CHAPTER X.

THE BRANDED LAD'S PROGRESS.

Gerald led the way downstairs and out on the street, on what might fairly be called a fool's errand were it not for

the fact that his enemies were rushing into a trap prepared for them by the active lad.

"And is this such a desperate fellow?" inquired Gerald, as he turned to Oscar.

"Desperate is no name for him, Bernard," was the reply. "Where did he go?"

"There's the rascal I saw, now!" said Gerald, as he pointed to a crouching figure sneaking along on the other side of the street. "See—see—he's slipping away. He sees we're after him. Hanged if I don't soon see what he's made of."

And Gerald made a dash across the street, followed by Oscar and the others.

The moment that the suspected stranger saw this movement he darted along toward Broadway and crossed that thoroughfare.

"That's him!" said Tobin to Colonel Costello. "'Tis the very rig he had on the evening he gave me the slip down on the Battery."

"After him, then," returned the colonel; "and we'll pounce on him when he gets out of the crowded street. He mustn't escape us now, the infernal scoundrel! Take him alive if you can, Tobin!"

So intent were the pursuers in hunting down the fugitive that they took no notice of the locality into which he was leading them, and in a very short space of time they found themselves in a deserted spot on West Street, facing the river.

"Just the spot to nab the villain," said Tobin, "for we could get a boat and whip him over the river very nicely to the——"

"Hush, Tobin," interrupted Colonel Costello, in a low voice. "Remember we're not alone."

Gerald O'Grady heard Tobin's words and he muttered to himself:

"Aha! you villains, I know now that my poor mother is over the river, there."

"There he goes into that old house," said Oscar, as he pointed to a brick building standing in from the street. "Will we venture after him?"

"To be sure we will!" cried the disguised Gerald as he darted forward. "We've run him down at last. Now for the brush. Come on—come on! Are you all afraid of one poor devil?"

"I don't like the looks of this place," said Tobin as he peered up the dark passage. "And 'tis a lonesome neighborhood. The fellow might kill us all in the dark, colonel!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Gerald. "What a fine fellow you are to go man-hunting. Come on, Oscar, and we'll take the rascal ourselves. I'll claim half the reward."

"Come on, Tobin!" cried Colonel Costello as he drew his revolvers and followed Gerald and his son into the dark passage. "Don't be such a coward!"

And Tobin was compelled to follow.

Into the dark entry the disguised, branded lad led the way, muttering the while:

"The fellow must be hiding here somewhere. The old house is deserted. Keep together, Oscar. Come on, my brave Tobin, till we catch the fox!"

"We'll catch the devil first, I'm thinkin'," grumbled Tobin. "Oh, Lord, I'm gone!"

And the cautious man received a blow on the head that sent him reeling to the floor.

At the same moment Gerald uttered a cry of alarm as he fell to the ground, exclaiming:

"They've caught us in a trap, Oscar. Oh, heavens! I'm done for!"

Colonel Costello and his son attempted to retreat through the dark passage, but the former stumbled over the insensible Tobin and fell on the floor, striking his head against the wall.

Before he could regain his feet or use his weapon, strong

hands seized his arms, a gag was placed in his mouth and enraged man felt a pair of handcuffs slipping on his hand they were forced behind him.

Oscar Costello uttered one cry of alarm on hearing his tended friend's warning, and while endeavoring to make way back to the door he received a blow on the head with heavy club, while a well-known voice rang in his ear:

"You perjured cur! You'll now pay for the brand and lash you forced on me!"

In less than two minutes Colonel Costello, his son and were secured and gagged in that dark entry.

"What will we do with this meddlesome young dandy cried a stern voice as a light flashed on the darkness.

The three prisoners were now sensible of their position. Tobin had recovered consciousness, and he was staring two men who stood over them with revolvers ready for

They saw that the two men wore black crape over their faces and they could also see the young gent known to them as Bernard Collier, lying insensible where he had been assailed while in the act of leading on the hunt.

One of the men held a lamp in his hand, as he replied:

"Leave him here till we attend to these scoundrels first. The fool got what he deserved for joining them against us. Come on here, Colonel Costello, till you get a taste of the fun. Enjoyed yourself in the Bandon barracks. You're dead if you don't mind what you're told, now."

The three prisoners were led, or rather dragged, through a rear passage, and then down a steep cellarway, while the young dandy was left lying in the hall.

Colonel Costello was not a coward, yet he trembled in every limb as he realized that he had been entrapped into this lonesome den by his hated enemy, Gerald O'Grady.

"The young viper must be in league with a band of outlaws," he thought, "and our doom is sealed unless we buy them off. Tobin was right, and I was a fool."

CHAPTER XI.

WHAT THE PRISONERS SAW IN THE CELLAR.

As the two masked men pushed their prisoners before them down the steep steps, the lamp was blown out; and when they all entered the dark cellar no light was visible save the blaze from a furnace that was burning at the end of the apartment.

When the door was secured one of the masked men raised his voice, saying:

"Now, Colonel Costello, know that you are in the power of those who will show you no mercy, for you deserve no mercy. Villain of the world, you know you deserve to die. Do you want to reply, do you? Off with the gag, then, and let me hear what he has to say."

Colonel Costello stamped on the floor impatiently while the masked man was speaking; and the moment the gag was removed he burst forth:

"Murderous wretches, who are you that dare assail a British soldier in this way? Do you know that you are assisting a branded felon—an escaped, murderous convict—to have vengeance on gentlemen?"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the masked man. "'Tis very well known what we're doing, and what you are, you upstart tyrant. Up with the lights, there, till they see what's in store for them. Gerald O'Grady, are you ready for the work?"

"Ready and only too willing!" sang out the branded man from the end of the apartment.

As he uttered these words several lights flashed up in the dark cellar and the prisoners beheld a scene that made them tremble and turn pale.

Gerald O'Grady, with a heavy cat-o'-nine-tails in his right hand, stood near one of those triangles to which prisoners in the English army are secured when undergoing the fearful punishment of the lash.

The triangle was placed in the middle of the cellar, and at the further end of the apartment a furnace was burning.

The young man glared at his old foes for a moment as he grasped the lash, and then in a voice that was fierce and strong, he cried:

"Do you remember the day in the Bandon barracks, ye cowardly dogs, when I swore that I'd pay you off in your own coin for the disgrace ye forced on me? You couldn't force a cry from me. Now we'll see how you'll bear the same dose, you scoundrels!"

Oscar and Tobin were still gagged, and they could only reply by groans to this threat.

Colonel Costello was in a fearful rage, as he yelled:

"You infernal scoundrel, you will not dare to inflict that punishment on me. I'll have your life——"

"Bah!" cried Gerald. "You know by this time that I don't fear you. Yes, Colonel Costello, you and your son, and that treacherous hound who tried to murder me on Spike Island, will feel the lash and the brand also!"

"Merciful God!" yelled the infuriated and terror-stricken man. "Will such an outrage be permitted in a civilized country? Who are you, men, that aid this villain? Will you—oh, I'm sick. I will pay you well if you release us at once and help me to capture this young fiend. A thousand pounds to each of you, and you seize him now!"

As the colonel uttered these words Gerald tore the gag from Oscar's mouth, flung it on the floor, and then sprang toward the furnace to grasp the brand that was reddening there.

"Father—father!" gasped Oscar, "what will we do at all? This is terrible!"

"Where's my mother?" roared Gerald, as he sprang at Oscar with the red brand. "Tell me where you placed my poor mother; confess that you swore falsely against me; make your father give me up my fortune that he robbed me of!"

"I will—I confess—father, promise!" gasped the terrified Oscar, as he quailed before the burning brand and the fiery youth.

"Hush, Oscar!" said his father. "They are only trying to frighten us. They dare not injure us, for they know they would suffer for it."

Then turning to the masked men he cried:

"Fools, stop this play at once and let us leave this place in peace, if you will not assist us in taking this vile convict."

Another burst of laughter greeted this appeal, and then one of the masked men said:

"You will never leave this spot until you tell us where you are hiding Mrs. O'Grady."

"Will you let us all go in peace if I tell you that?" inquired the colonel.

"No, no! a thousand times no!" thundered the branded lad. "I swore an oath that you and your son would feel the lash and the brand, and you will feel it, though I never find my mother. When your good daughter went on her knees, begging of you to spare me that fearful disgrace, you flung her from you and hurried out to enjoy my agony and suffering. You gloated over me while the soldier laid on the blows, calling on him to strike harder. He never could strike as hard as I will strike when I lay it on to your son before your eyes. Tie him up, friends!"

"Mercy! mercy!" yelled Oscar, as the masked men sprang toward him, while Gerald hastened to his post near the triangle.

"Let's burst out the door and call for help, Tobin!" cried the desperate colonel, as he sprang back toward the entrance.

"Bah!" cried one of the masked men as he rushed back with

a revolver in his hand. "Do ye think we're all fools. Ye couldn't get out of this if ye had the strength of Samson. I'll secure ye, anyhow."

As the man spoke he seized a rope and then secured the two prisoners by tying them to a post in the centre of the cellar.

Colonel Costello sent forth cries of agony and alarm as he saw the others stripping the upper clothing from the body of his trembling and whining son.

"On with the gag again if he doesn't stop there!" said the other masked man as he assisted Gerald in tying Oscar to the triangle. "Now for it, Gerald!"

"Gerald O'Grady! Gerald O'Grady!" yelled the colonel, spare my son and I'll make all amends. I'll give up your property; I'll release your mother; I'll give you my daughter in marriage. Oh, for mercy's sake, think that I'm her father!"

When Gerald heard this frantic appeal he turned to the tall, masked figure who was assisting in securing the victim to the triangle, and said:

"Can we believe him, sir?"

"Gerald O'Grady," was the stern reply, "can you forget the lash and the brand on your own back, and the dark night in Cork harbor when that other hired scoundrel tried to murder you? Remember your oath and lay on that lash, or I'll do it for you. They had no mercy on you or yours, and don't you dream of sparing them."

"I won't—I can't!" cried Gerald, as the fierce glare of hatred flashed from his eyes, while he seized the cat-o'-nine-tails. "Oscar Costello, I'll give you what you gave me, and with a vengeance and a half at that!"

And the next moment he raised the instrument of torture to bring it down on the bare back of the miserable young man.

A yell of pain broke from Oscar; a cry of anguish burst from the father, while the gagged Tobin groaned in anticipation of his own punishment as he glared at the thrilling scene.

"Mercy! Oh, God, mercy!" yelled Oscar as the lash cut into his flesh.

"The mercy you gave me, you perjured cur!" yelled Gerald, as he laid on with furious vigor; "and I didn't cry at all. Oh, God, but I feel your jeers and see your black looks now, and I couldn't spare you if the saints from heaven appeared to me. Take that, and that, and think of what you made me suffer!"

"That will do, Gerald—he's fainted!" cried the tall mask. "Give him the brand at once, and 'twill bring him to."

There was no sign of pity in that stern voice, though the drooping head and pale face of the sufferer were enough to move the hardest heart to compassion.

A moment later and the red-hot iron was burning into the flesh.

And Oscar Costello would forever after bear the large "D" on his shoulder.

So far Gerald O'Grady was even with his tyrant officer—the perjured witness against him.

To loosen the cords that bound the sufferer to the triangle, to lay him on the floor and pour some brandy into his mouth, was but the work of a few moments for the avengers.

When Oscar Costello opened his eyes again he saw his father at the triangle, and the vengeful Gerald was near him, lash in hand.

"Gerald O'Grady," gasped the victim, "I am an old man, and 'tis cruel to torture me in this way. Oh, if you have not hearts of stone, all of you, you will spare me!"

"Where's my mother?" cried Gerald, as he raised the lash to strike.

"Will you stop if I tell you?"

"I will," returned Gerald. "Speak quick, or I'll give it to you at once."

"She's over in Jersey——"

Before the prisoner could utter another word a violent

knocking was heard at the cellar door at the back, followed by cries of:

"What's up in there? Open in the name of the law, or we'll burst in!"

"Saved—saved!" gasped the agonized colonel as he sank insensible on the triangle.

"Help—help—murder!" sang out Oscar Costello, in a loud voice. "For heaven's sake——"

"Hush, or you are a dead man!" said Gerald, as he sprang toward his prostrate foe. "What will we do now, sir?"

The tall man in the mask glared at Colonel Costello for a moment ere he said:

"I've a good mind to kill him while he's in our power, the scoundrel; but we'll be able for him again. Out with the lights and leave them as they are. Up and out the front way!"

And still the officers outside kept up the cries and knocks.

Out went the lights, and up the front stairs rushed Gerald and his two friends, while Oscar Costello yelled out:

"Police—police! they're making out the front way, and they've almost murdered us. Catch the scoundrels—the convicts—and father will reward you. Break in the door—quick!"

"My brother—my brother!" cried a female voice outside. "Oh, Oscar! is father here?"

At that moment the police forced in the door and Fannie Costello rushed into the cellar with them.

Cries of rage and pain were heard in the hall above, where the three friends were fighting their way through the crowd of policemen and others who had been attracted to the spot.

When Colonel Costello recovered consciousness his daughter was bending over him in the cellar and his son was lying on the ground, groaning with pain and foaming with rage.

Tobin and four policemen were standing on the floor, holding a struggling lad between them.

"We've got one of the scoundrels, colonel!" cried Tobin as he pointed at Gerald, "and we'll soon have them all, for the police are after them."

"You infernal villain!" yelled Colonel Costello, as he sprang on the prisoner, "I'll have your heart's blood for your work to-night!"

"Back, sir!" cried the police sergeant. "He's our prisoner now, and we'll protect him."

"I told you, Colonel Costello," cried Gerald as he pointed at Oscar, "that I'd have my vengeance on you and yours. I'm not dead yet; and you can't rub out the brand on that cur's back."

"Oh, Gerald—Gerald!" cried Fannie. "Nothing can save you now!"

Gerald's two companions, who were no other than the mysterious old stranger and Ned Burke, succeeded in effecting their escape.

Gerald O'Grady was lodged in the station-house that night; and Colonel Costello, with his son and daughter, as well as Tobin, were driven to the boarding house in the carriage.

After their arrival the colonel found the man known as Maurice Collier and related to him all that had taken place. After the colonel had taken his leave Collier at once went in search of Ned Burke, and found him on a corner near the police station wherein was Gerald. They had not been there long when who should come along, in a coach, but the colonel and Tobin. They alighted and went into the station. In a short time they came out with a policeman leading Gerald, who placed him in the coach with the two villains, and it was driven away. Suspecting treachery, Collier ordered Ned to get up behind on the coach while he hired another team and followed them up. This was carried out successfully and both teams were on the same ferryboat crossing the river to Jersey City. After leaving the boat the carriage containing the villains and Gerald proceeded to the Paterson Plank Road. At a lonely place on the road Ned crept up on

top of the coach and dealt the driver a blow, knocking him to the ground. Ned thereupon took up the reins.

Shortly afterward Tobin leaned out of the carriage window and spoke to the driver. He then discovered who Ned was, and ordered him to stop the carriage. He then got out and shot at Ned, wounding him slightly, and he jumped upon the seat and drove, himself. He then saw they were being followed by another coach. After communicating this fact to the colonel they stopped in a clump of trees and ambushed the other coach and shot both horses. Then they immediately drove off with great speed. The ambushed coach contained Maurice Collier and Ned Burke, whom the driver and Collier had found lying in the road. Collier gave them his revolver and told them to follow the other coach and save Gerald, and that he would pay for the horses. Thereupon both started off on a run for the retreating coach, leaving Collier behind. The old gentleman had received a sprained ankle.

CHAPTER XII.

A FRANTIC WOMAN'S DASH FOR LIBERTY.

In a lonely spot, about half a mile from the plank road, stood an old farmhouse. In this house Gerald's mother had been kept a prisoner for more than a year, watched over by one Tatter Jack.

It is necessary that we now go back and explain how Mrs. O'Grady came to be in this place.

Mrs. O'Grady had been the daughter of a wealthy Limerick shopkeeper.

Eugene O'Grady was the son of an estated gentleman in the county of Tipperary, and fell in love with the shopkeeper's daughter. But his father was a very proud man and refused to allow Gerald to marry her. Nevertheless they were secretly married. Ned Costello was the only son of a widow, who afterward became Mrs. O'Grady by marrying the proud old landholder—Eugene's father. This woman was always plotting to get control of the property for her own son. Thus it was that Gerald's marriage was kept a secret.

Years passed away and Gerald was born. He grew to be a handsome lad.

Then came the rebellion of '48, and Gerald's father took up arms against the English flag.

Eugene was wounded in battle and took refuge in his father's house. But he was informed upon by his stepmother and was arrested, and, together with his wife's brother, transported to Australia.

Old Mr. O'Grady was so much affected by his son's banishment that he died, leaving his property to his second wife and her son, in trust for the exiled one and his heirs.

Ned Costello, Eugene's stepbrother, had joined the English army.

One day Eugene's wife received a letter supposed to have been written by Eugene, stating he had escaped and was in America, and asking her to join him there.

Never dreaming of treachery, she sailed in the first vessel, leaving her son, Gerald, behind her.

Arriving in America she in vain sought her husband. He was not to be found. Then Tobin appeared and announced that Gerald and his father had arrived with him. They said that Eugene was over in New Jersey, and she willingly accompanied him to a farmhouse in the woods, where she was seized and imprisoned. Then Colonel Costello appeared and demanded her to sign papers deeding the property over to him. He told her Eugene was dead, and if she did not sign she would never see her son again.

She defied him, and they left her imprisoned. The colonel

returned to Ireland, leaving Tobin in America, resolving to return in a little while.

Thus matters stood for nearly a year when one night a coach drove up to the farmhouse. In it were Colonel Costello and Tobin, who had Gerald as a prisoner, bound and gagged.

Bringing his mother into the room they again demanded that she sign the papers. But she refused, and, when they were not looking, made a dash for the door and ran out, locking it after her.

Tobin and her jailer, Tatter Jack, started in pursuit. She had not gone far before she came upon Maurice Collier in the road. Surprised and startled, she implored him to protect her. Immediately behind her came her pursuers. But Maurice gave a shrill whistle and out of the woods rushed Ned Burke and their driver. Tobin and Tatter Jack immediately retreated toward the farmhouse, pursued by the others.

As the time passed, and the wretches did not return with his mother, the brave lad's hopes grew brighter and brighter; while the man before him stamped on the floor with rage at the delay.

"Curse Tobin and that other fool!" cried the colonel as he opened the door and looked out. "Is it possible the woman can have escaped them? Ha! there go shots in the woods. Great heavens! are our foes upon us, after all?"

A grunt of satisfaction burst from Gerald through the gag as he heard the welcome sounds and his enemy's words.

"You'll not escape me, you cur!" yelled the man as he pointed the revolver at Gerald, while his eyes gleamed with rage. "If your friends were to be at the door they could not save your life. Ha! who's this coming now?"

"They're on us, sir—they're on us!" cried Tobin as he burst in at the door and closed it after him.

"Who's on us—how many—where's Tatter Jack?" inquired the colonel.

"Tatter Jack is down, sir; and that base hound of a soldier is after me with the woman. We haven't time to get the horses out and cut stick."

"How many of them are coming?" inquired the colonel as he sprang to the window.

"Only two and the woman, sir; but that soldier is able for a dozen. Will we run or fight them here in the house, sir?"

"We'll fight the dogs, of course," replied the colonel. "Ha! here they come. Tobin, stand firm and we'll crush the dogs yet. Ha! there, you scoundrels—what do you want?"

"We want Gerald O'Grady, ye ould villain!" cried Ned Burke, in a loud voice.

"You'll get a dose of lead if you don't be off, you thieves!" said the colonel as he pointed his revolver at the unwelcome intruders.

"Get behind the fence," said Ned Burke, "and we'll soon bring them to terms."

"My son—my Gerald!" cried the mother. "Oh, they'll murder my darling boy!"

"Ay, that we will, and before your eyes, woman!" yelled the colonel from the window. "If you don't begone from this at once, and do my bidding afterward."

Then he turned to Tobin, crying:

"Drag the young scoundrel here into the light so that his mother can see me blow his brains out. Ha! ha! ha! you foolish woman! Don't you dream of baffling me!"

Tobin seized the table, dragged it toward the window and then pushed Gerald, with the chair, to the same spot.

"Look here, woman," cried Colonel Costello, as he clapped the revolver to Gerald's head, "unless you come in here alone and send those other fools about their business, I'll scatter his brains over the floor this instant. One movement toward the door, you fools, and your friend is dead!"

"If ye harm a hair in his head, ye ould scoundrel," yelled

Ned Burke, "we'll burn the house down over yer head and roast ye all alive! If ye're a man and a soldier ye'll come out here and fight us fairly."

"Let's bang at 'em, sir," said Tobin, "and drive 'em away. Then we'll out and harness the horses and make off. We'll have the whole country on us if we stay here much longer. There they go now. Will we fire at them while we can?"

"Yes—yes!" cried the colonel. "Kill them at once before they can send for help. Fire!"

Two sharp reports rang out at the same moment, and the balls whistled by the young driver's head as he was retreating to the woods after Mrs. O'Grady.

Tobin slipped out to the shed where the horses were resting, while Colonel Costello kept a sharp eye in the direction of the woods, to see that his foes did not slip back to the attack.

In less than five minutes the carriage was ready, and then the wretches forced Gerald out the back way and into his former prison van.

Tobin sprang on the seat and drove the horses at a walk through a path at the back of the house.

"Is Ned Burke deserting me?" thought Gerald, as he listened for the expected attack.

As if in answer to this silent question a loud shout rang out at that moment and then Gerald heard a well-known voice crying:

"Have at 'em, me lad! Down with the villain on the box! Shoot the horses! Don't let 'em get away from us on your life!"

Colonel Costello put his head out of the window and fired his revolver at the assailants, while he shouted to Tobin:

"Drive on—drive on! Lash the horses now and get away! Fight to the death if we must!"

Tobin bent down his head as two pistol-balls flew past him, and then with a shout of defiance he lashed the horses and the animals dashed through the rough path at a fearful rate.

"After them, me lad—after them!" cried Ned Burke. "Bring down the horses if ye can. Run for yer life now! Gerald, me lad, I'll not let them whip ye away!"

"My son, my Gerald!" cried the woman, as she saw the carriage disappear in the wooded path. "Oh, will I ever see him again?"

CHAPTER XIII.

AN ANGRY MAN ON THE WATCH.

When Jake Johnson, who was knocked down from his seat on the coach as he was driving Gerald and his captors along the plank road, recovered his senses he muttered, as he rubbed his head and stared around:

"What in thunder struck me? Blamed if I ever got such a laying out before in my life!"

After thinking for a while he resolved to return to the Jersey City ferry-house and wait. Probably they would return with the team.

He did so. Two hours passed away, while Jake stood at his post, ruminating the while over the stirring incidents of the evening.

"Choke me if I can see through the hull arrangement at all," he muttered at length; "but I'm blowed if I don't make some one pay me for this infernal racket."

At that moment the rattle of a cab was heard along the street, and Jake soon recognized his own turnout driving to the ferry.

By the light of the lamps at the ferry-house the man recognized Tobin on the seat, and he could also perceive that the blinds of the coach were drawn down by those inside.

"Guess I'll play the same dodge the rip played on me!" muttered Jake Johnson, as he slipped behind the carriage while he drew a short, heavy club from his pocket at the same time. "Oh, won't I give that treacherous skunk a sockadolager!"

Out through the ferry-house on the New York side, and up Cortlandt Street the carriage rolled, with Jake Johnson clinging behind.

Wheeling into Greenwich Street, Tobin bent down to the front and said:

"If we only knew where to find the chap that owns the coach, sir, I think he's just the lad to give us a hand now."

"Take it, and blast your treacherous eyes," said Jake Johnson, as he let fly at Tobin from the top of the coach. "Now, you infernal skunks, what do yer mean by laying me out and stealing off with my coach?"

The blow sent Tobin from the seat to the ground, but the villain landed on his feet.

In a moment he had his revolver out and pointed at Jake Johnson, as he said:

"And blast yer eyes, ye blundering fool, for not knowing that we hadn't a hand or part in what happened to ye or yer coach. Bad cess to ye, and is this me thanks for bringing it back, safe and sound. Hold on there! Colonel, here's our man. Have done, ye gommul, till I tell ye what happened to us. Let me up!"

Jake Johnson saw at once that he had made a mistake, and he thrust his pistol in his pocket as he grumbled forth:

"How in thunder was I to know but I hit the right mark?"

"Ye hit hard enough, anyway," said Tobin, as he rubbed the side of his head.

"Not half as hard as I got," returned the angry driver, with a strong oath.

"An' not quarter as hard as ye will let fly, I'll be bound!" hissed Tobin, in his ear, "when ye know the murtherin' thief who struck ye. Drive on now an' I'll tell ye what's up. We're all safe now, colonel. Listen to me, lad."

And the cunning Tobin told Jake Johnson as much of the night's adventures as he deemed advisable, in order to secure his co-operation against Gerald and their other enemies.

"We got away be the skin of our teeth at last," he concluded, "and we made back here again with yer coach. Now, are ye man enough to join us again' the divils? Show us some safe place to hide away the young villain inside, and take a hand with us again' those ye know, and I'll promise ye that ye won't be left empty-handed?"

"That's just what I'm in for," returned Jake Johnson, with another oath. "I'll do anything to get square with the skunk what keeled me over to-night; and I go in for making an honest pile whenever I get the chance."

"In the first place, then," continued Tobin, "do ye know a safe place to lodge our prisoner in? Some place where we might do as we liked with him if we wanted to pay him off as he fixed the young gent to-night."

"In course I do. Why, I'm driving ye right there now," responded the driver as he turned down, Spring Street toward the river. "There ain't a safer place in New York than the very old rookery where you caught him to-night. Just the thing."

"Begor, but I believe ye," said Tobin, with an ominous smile. "Who knows but there'll be another ghost there afore long. Drive right to the spot."

"Here we are," said the driver, as he pulled up the horses before the old building, "and there ain't a soul around to see us, either."

Tobin sprang down from the seat, and in a few hurried sentences, explained to Colonel Costello the expediency of securing Gerald in the old haunted house before them.

While they were thus conversing they dragged Gerald O'Grady into the dark entry.

"Take him upstairs," said Jake Johnson. "That's where the old ghost hangs out. Nobody will ever think of going up there."

When the carriage rolled up to the old house, a forlorn-looking man, with a rough, matted, grayish beard, and dressed in a sailor's worn-out suit, was reclining under the stoop.

The man had the appearance of an outcast, and he acted like one who did not care to be seen in the daylight, as he crouched under the stoop when he heard the voices near him.

When they dragged Gerald into the old house the tattered seaman sprang out from his hiding place and started after the intruders, as he muttered:

"Merciful father, if that isn't Ned Costello's voice, and no mistake. 'Tis many a long day since I heard it, but I can't be mistaken. What are they up to with that poor fellow, and who can he be? By my faith, but I'll know more before long. There's some rascally work going on here, and if there is, what can a poor hunted creature like me do?"

The man stole into the entry as he was muttering these words, and he could hear the conspirators dragging their prisoner up the rickety stairs.

"The cellar is the best place, I think," said Tobin, "for we could tie him to a post there."

"So I think," responded the colonel. "We must make sure of him for some hours at least, and then he'll never trouble us again."

"Let's lug him down there, then, and tie him," said Jake Johnson. "I must put the horses up, for they're just used up."

Down the stairs they dragged their prisoner, and the old sailor retreated to his post under the stoop.

About five minutes after he heard the three men return to the front door, and then he listened anxiously to their conversation.

"Yer can bet yer life he won't get away from there afore we come to-night," said the driver, "and I'll be ready to lay for the others with yer this afternoon. We all want a rest now."

"We can depend on you, then?" returned the colonel. "And you can drive us to Jersey to look for them in the afternoon, my man. I'll not rest till I secure that woman again, and punish the fools who are meddling in my business."

"I'll be on hand, sir, you bet!" responded the driver as he sprang on the seat. "Get in."

Then the carriage drove away, leaving Tobin standing at the door of the old house.

CHAPTER XIV.

TOBIN IN THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

Though Tobin declared that he was not afraid of the devil himself he showed a decided reluctance to entering that old house after the carriage drove away with Colonel Costello.

"What between the young devil below and the old ghost above," said Tobin aloud, as he hesitated at the door, "'tis a queer lodging I'll have, though it can't be far from daybreak now. Begor, but I'll stretch meself here at the foot of the stairs so that I can scoot out if the old Dutchman above makes at me."

"And there's another ghost under here who has his eye on you, my fine rascal!" muttered the old sailor under the stoop. "And maybe he won't give you a fright that you won't forget. I can't make out what all this villainy means, but I can see that Costello is up to some bloody work."

And the old sailor listened and watched until he heard a heavy breathing in the hall above.

Gerald O'Grady was lying on the bare cellar floor, his

ds and feet bound together, a rope around his waist secured to one of the posts, and the gag was still in his mouth. Though secured in this way in the dark cellar, the lad's mind was as free and as active as ever; and he no sooner heard the retreating footsteps of his vile captors than he commenced to plan and to work for life and liberty.

Gerald had overheard the conversation about the ghost; he was well aware of the character of the place when Burke hired it for their purpose some days before.

By rubbing the gag against his shoulder the determined lad succeeded in freeing his mouth; and then he turned his attention to the rope that secured his body to the post.

A stealthy step was heard on the cellar steps outside; a rapping with the key in the door; a footfall on the hard floor, and then Gerald was certain that Tobin had returned.

"Maybe the scoundrel means to kill me now in earnest," thought the helpless lad.

"If the unfortunate man down here is awake and can answer," said a low voice, "let him do so at once for I am here to serve him."

"Who are you?" demanded Gerald.

"It matters not to you if I'm the ghost of the Dutchman, but I'll set you free," was the stranger's response.

"Faith, but you're right there," said Gerald; "and that same day would be welcome now if that was his purpose. But I am; and let me see if you make good your words, who you are."

"Are you bound yet?" inquired the voice as the speaker stepped near the prisoner.

"Hands and feet," was the reply. "If you have a knife, get to work, and God reward you."

"What's your name, and where do you come from?" inquired the stranger, in the same low voice, while he proceeded to cut the cords.

Gerald hesitated a moment before replying to this question, as he was not yet fully assured of the stranger's honest intentions.

"Bernard Collier," he replied at length, "and I come from the north."

"Collier—Collier," repeated the stranger. "And what spite has Colonel Costello against you that he should treat you in this way?"

"Tis too long a story to tell now," replied Gerald; "but you prove my friend in this scrape, I'll tell you all and reward you well, too."

"I'm not looking for reward, sir," said the stranger, "and I don't seek to know your business. I am only too willing to assist any one that Costello lifts his hands against in this land, for he's a born scoundrel. But I won't say any more about that now. The man that's left here to watch you is sleeping up in the hall, sound asleep."

"Tobin?" inquired Gerald.

"I believe that's what Costello called him," replied the stranger. "Will you slip out over him and make off, or—?" "No, by heavens!" interrupted Gerald, "I'll do nothing of the kind. If you hate Colonel Costello you'll help me to take the scoundrel and tie him down here where they left me. He's alive, he's a greater villain than the other, if it's possible. I'll save me who you are at all, so that I can rely on you fully."

Gerald uttered these words he followed the stranger to the cellar door.

"Whoever he is," yelled a murderous voice at the threshold, "I'll die like a dog! Take that, ye meddling fool!"

The stranger felt the barrel of a pistol thrust against his back, and then followed the snap of the weapon without any delay following.

"Ha!" cried the old sailor as he seized the weapon and

sprang on Tobin. "Do you suppose I was fool enough to leave the pistol with you, loaded. Take that, you rogue!"

"Let me at him," said Gerald, as he sprang on his old foe. "Tobin, ye villain, 'tis my turn again."

Down on the hard floor went Gerald and the two men, and Tobin was under his assailants.

"Leave him to me, young man!" cried the old sailor as he pounded away on Tobin's face, "and you go and bring the rope and gag here. Strike a light if you can. Ha! you scoundrel, do you think you're able for me, eh? Take that! and that!"

There was something so stern and commanding in the voice of the stranger, and he seemed so confident in his ability to master Tobin that Gerald was compelled to obey him.

And yet Tobin fought and struggled with force and fury, realizing at the same time that he was in the hands of a fearful adversary.

"Don't let him go, on your life!" cried Gerald, as he felt in the dark for the cords and gag.

"Never fear that, young sir," replied the old sailor, pressing his knees on Tobin's breast, while he clutched the struggling man's throat with an iron grip. "Have you found the cord?"

"Here it is," replied Gerald.

"Put your hand in my pocket and take out a match," continued the stranger. "Now, you tool of a villain, have you found your match?"

"Don't murder me!" gasped Tobin.

"You deserve it, you hound!" said Gerald, as he bent down to assist in securing his foe. "Oh, if we only had Colonel Costello here with you now!"

"He'll be here to look for him in the morning," returned the old sailor. "We'll keep this rascal here as a bait for him."

"Heaven bless you, whoever you are!" said Gerald to the old stranger, as they dragged Tobin to his post, "for you are a Godsend to me. There's a lamp here in the corner, and I'll light it. Ha! ha! Tobin, roguery and villainy never win in the long run."

Gerald proceeded to get the lamp and light it; and then it did not take them long to secure and gag Tobin.

Then Gerald turned to the ragged and weather-beaten sailor, and seized his hand, cordially, saying:

"You helped me to-night to right a great wrong, and to baffle one of the greatest scoundrels on earth, sir. Leave him there now, and come with me. Let us see what money you have about you, Tobin."

And Gerald did not scruple to deprive the wretch of all the ready cash he had in his pockets.

"Now, sir," said Gerald, to the old sailor, as they stood on the sidewalk outside of the old house, "you have saved my life, and I will be your friend while I live. What can I do for you?"

The old sailor regarded the lad with earnest eyes, ere he replied:

"You have a good, honest face, and I will trust you. I am a poor outcast, without a home or a friend in this wide world. When I stretched myself to rest under there to-night it was my purpose to go look for a ship to take me to England or Ireland in the morning. Now, since I saw the man who brought you here in the coach a while ago, I have changed my mind. If he is your enemy I'll be your friend. Don't ask me any more questions, for I can't answer you."

"He is my enemy—my bitter, deadly enemy," replied Gerald; "but I can't tell you why, now, for I am pledged to secrecy—for others' sake, as well as my own. I will not seek to pry into your secrets, my good man. Colonel Costello will be here before many hours to see that villain below. Will you join me to arrest him?"

"With a heart and a half," replied the old sailor, "for I was about to make that offer."

"Then take some of this money and get what you want, if you won't come with me. You have his pistol. Come back here as soon as you can and watch him. If Colonel Costello comes back here before I do you'll know what to do with him. If that driver comes here first, let him have his way, even if he sets Tobin free; but track them where they go."

"I understand, Mr. Collier," returned the old sailor, "and you may rely upon me."

"Wait here a moment," continued Gerald, as he returned to the old house, having given the old sailor some of the money taken from Tobin.

CHAPTER XV.

A TRYING MOMENT.

Tatter Jack was wounded in the struggle when his assailants hastened away with Gerald's mother, in pursuit of Tobin, and to attempt the rescue of the young prisoner in the old farmhouse.

Now, it so happened that Tatter Jack's wound was not a serious one; and the desperate rascal would have struggled on to the death if his companion had stood his ground.

When he saw Tobin flying through the woods, and his assailants after him, Tatter Jack concluded that it would be best for him to use a little discretion and watch the result of the encounter at the farmhouse before venturing to openly oppose the brave men who had rescued his late charge.

The scheming rascal did wait and watch for his opportunity; and it turned up in a way that he least expected.

When Ned Burke and the young driver made the gallant attack on the coach as they were bearing Gerald away by the path at the back of the farmhouse, Mrs. O'Grady was almost frantic with excitement and apprehension for her son's safety.

When the poor woman saw the carriage dashing down the path, with Ned Burke and the young driver in the vain pursuit, she uttered a piercing cry in behalf of Gerald, and then sank insensible on the green turf.

"Here's me chance, be the holy poker!" cried Tatter Jack, as he dashed out of his place of concealment. "She's worth five hundred pounds to me, and, bedad, but I'll hold her till I get me money from some one, for that's me bargain with Tobin."

Seizing the insensible woman in his arms the rascal bore her into the farmhouse and proceeded to bind her arms and feet, as he muttered:

"I'll put ye where they can't get hold of ye, me good woman, till I get paid for me trouble. Tatter Jack isn't the fool to let them come Paddy over him, no matter how the fight goes between them. Now, then, for the black hole below."

The unscrupulous wretch bore the woman into an inner apartment; and then, lifting a trap door, he carried his victim down a rude ladder.

Once below the rascal did not take long to secure the unfortunate creature with cords.

Leaving the insensible woman in that hiding place Tatter Jack ascended to the room above, kicked the ladder away from the trap door and hastened away to his hiding place in the wood, just as Ned Burke and the young driver returned from their unsuccessful pursuit of the carriage.

"Mrs. O'Grady, ma'am," said Ned Burke, as he reached the house, "where are ye, at all? Come, ma'am—come; we must be off to New York after the devils, for that's where they faced to."

Of course, there was no reply to this appeal.

"She must have gone to see the man on the road, frie said the driver, "for she ain't around here anywhere, or s answer."

"Begor, you're right!" responded Ned Burke. "Let's n out there at once. We must tend to the master, anyway; he's the boss of us all. Come along, me lad—come al But hold on till I give another call for her."

"Call away till ye bust!" muttered Tatter Jack in his hi place. "But ye'll never find her till I handle me ho earned money."

"Bad cess to the luck!" said Ned Burke, as he hast through the wood with his companion. "Here the mast down, Gerald's mother is missing after we fought so for her, and the dear lad himself is whipped off be the lains."

"And my two horses knocked to thunder," responded young driver.

"Oh, that's aisily mended, me foine feller," said the wa hearted soldier. "Depend on it but ye'll have the best in the city in their place as soon as money can buy them."

"I believe that will be all right; but I want to have and whack at the skunks that shot them," returned the driver.

"So ye will—so ye will, me lad. Ha—here's the ma sitting here on the roadside yet. Thank the Lord, he's missing, anyway! But where in the name of wonder is good woman?"

To say that Maurice Collier was furious when he h of the results of the encounters with the rufians and disappearance of the woman, will be simply expressing words and actions.

"Be thunder, sir!" cried the young driver, "there was of the skunks laid out in the woods, and he didn't turr after."

"That's the man who pounced on her, sure as you li cried Maurice Collier. "Come here and let me lean on pair of you and I'll hop back to that house. We'll searc from bottom to top, and the grounds around it. I won't back for Gerald until we find his mother."

Back through the woods the determined man limped, ported by Ned Burke and the young driver, and not a n escaped from him, although he was suffering intense a from his swollen ankle.

Ned and the young driver spent some time in looking the woman, but they did not discover the trap door in inner room.

"'Tis no use, sir," said Ned at length as he returned his friend from a futile search in the out-house. "They have whipped her away with them, somewhere."

"Then you and your friend will go and get a conveyance go to New York," responded the resolute man; "look Gerald by watching Colonel Costello and Tobin. I will main here to watch for poor Mary. Send me some one t the next house you come to, and send something to eat drink."

Ned Burke did not attempt to remonstrate with Maurice lier, for he knew that the man's mind was made up.

Placing some bread and water and a revolver on the t where Tatter Jack's whisky bottle was still lying, Ned and companions assisted the watcher to his position near by, then, with prayers and good wishes for his well being, faithful friends started out on their journey.

Maurice Collier sat there for some time, thinking over events of the night, and of his adventurous life, while e now and then he poured a little cold water on his heated a

He did not hear the low moans that broke from the b woman in the cellar; he did not hear the stealthy step out and he did not see the villainous eyes peering at him from window.

"Poor, dear Mary!" he muttered. "Where can you

all? To think that I should see you and then to lose you soon. Where are you, my poor girl?"

"What would ye give to know?" said a rough voice at the window. "Don't touch that pistol or I'll blow yer brains out!" Maurice Collier turned to the window and beheld the barrel of a revolver leveled at him, while behind it was Tatter Jack's scally face.

CHAPTER XVI.

TATTER JACK AND THE LAME MAN.

Maurice Collier looked at the villainous face behind the revolver for some moments, while his own hand was on the rapoon on the table; and it flashed through the man's mind that he had seen those eyes, and that he had heard that rough voice far away in the wilds of Australia.

"Who in the mischief can the fellow be?" thought Maurice, as he kept his eyes fixed on Tatter Jack's face. "His voice very familiar."

Then raising his own voice he cried:

"What are you up to, you scoundrel?"

"What am I up to—is it?" replied Tatter, with a grim smile. "Eggor, but I'm up to making a good haul wherever I can, I never had a better chance than now, I'm thinking."

Maurice Collier realized at once that he had to deal with unscrupulous rascal, and one who would not hesitate to shoot him on the spot; and yet the wanderer was determined to give the issue by defying the would-be murderer.

Maurice Collier, as we have witnessed, was a man of many resources; and it is not to be supposed that one who could stand death, when a being very near and dear to him was in danger from her enemies, would now be at a loss for an expedient to baffle the scoundrel outside.

As to compromising with the rascal, by offering him money, never once entered the man's mind, for he was accustomed enough life to carry his point by virtue of his daring courage and strength.

And yet Maurice Collier realized at that moment that it would be necessary to use a little strategy in order to bring the villain within the reach of his strong arm.

"This money you want, then?" he replied, as he withdrew his hand from the revolver on the table and placed it in his pocket. "How much will you take to show me where the man is at present?"

"A thousand pounds," replied Tatter Jack, "or five thousand pounds in the American money. 'Tis all one to me. I'm content of half of it for holding her for the colonel, and no more."

"Where it is for you," said Maurice Collier, as he drew forth the well-filled wallet. "Come in and go it, for I can't stir with my foot."

"Do ye take me for a born fool, to venture in there so that I could blaze away at me with that pistol before ye?" replied the cunning Tatter.

The rascal's eyes gleamed with avarice as he looked at the money in the stranger's hand, and he muttered to himself: "Heavens! but this is a great Godsend, intirely! I'll have a penny he's got afore I'm done with him; and I'll get five hundred pounds from the colonel after."

"You are a great fool or a coward," replied Maurice Collier, "to think that a maimed man would be up and down with you. There! Now come in and I'll settle with you at once."

As the man at the table uttered these words he flung the revolver across the room and then held up his hands.

"Eggor, he manes fair, and so do I!" muttered Tatter Jack,

with a grim smile. "'Tis every penny of that money I'll have!"

And still holding his revolver presented at the maimed stranger, the treacherous scoundrel sprang through the window.

"So 'tis the woman ye want to find, sir?" he commenced, as he kept one eye on the stranger and the other on the wallet on the table.

"'Tis the woman I want to find," replied the stranger, in a gruff, assumed voice, as he fixed his flashing eyes on Tatter. "Here's one thousand pounds for you, if you show me where she is."

"Count it out there for me, then."

"Count it yourself," said Maurice Collier, as he pushed the wallet toward Tatter. "Ugh! how my ankle pains me. I must rub more of this liquor on it before I can say any more."

And the man reached across the table for the black bottle, while Tatter Jack seized the wallet in his ravenous paws.

"Faith, but I ought to charge ye for that fine whisky ye're wasting on me, too," he laughed, as he clapped the wallet in his pocket; "but I won't be too hard on ye. Supposing ye keep the whisky and I'll keep the money safe for ye till I have time to count it. Ha! ha! ha! Fair exchange, ye know, sir, is no robbery."

"That's true, Jack Welsh, you villain!" cried the man. "Take that!"

With a lightning-like movement Maurice Collier struck the rascal in the face with the bottle, while at the same moment he seized the pistol and turned it toward the ceiling.

Bang! went the weapon, and down on the floor by the table went Tatter Jack, with his assailant over him.

"Blood an' 'ounds!" yelled the scoundrel as he felt the man's strong grasp on his throat; "but I'll murder ye for this, whoever ye are! If ye know Jack Welsh, ye know what he's able to do."

"Aye, that I do; and you know full well what I'm able to do, you scoundrel!" yelled Maurice Collier as he forced the pistol from his opponent's grasp and flung it aside. "You have felt my arm before, and now I'll show you what I can do again. Take that—and that!"

"In the name of wonder, who are ye at all?" gasped the defeated wretch as he stared at his foe. "Oh, murther! murther! I know ye now, captain. Heavenly Father, is it living or dead ye are?"

"Alive, you infernal rascal!" cried Maurice Collier, in a fierce voice, "and I'll soon make a corpse of you if you don't do my bidding. Is this the way you treat me after your oath, you dog? Do you forget how I saved your worthless life when the bloodhounds were after you in the woods of Australia?"

"Stop—stop, captain, agra, and I'll tell ye. I'll go for her this minnit an' bring her to ye!" yelled Tatter, as he stared at the uplifted bottle.

"Silence, you scoundrel!" cried Maurice Collier as he bent his ear to listen. "What is that I hear?"

"'Tis only the cats outside, sir!" cried Tatter, eagerly. "They're always whining about here be night."

"That's not a cat, you infernal scoundrel. Don't open your lips again!"

The cold perspiration rolled down on Tatter Jack's face as he stared at the deadly weapon, while Maurice Collier listened anxiously to the suppressed moaning that arose from the cellar under the back room.

"That's a human voice!" he cried as he seized the trembling wretch once more. "Great heavens! she's down in some hole under here all this time, you dastardly fiend! Up and bear me to her at once. No more humbugging, you lying scoundrel!"

Maurice Collier fairly dragged the wretch from his knees

to his feet as he uttered these words, and he sprang from his chair at the same moment.

Tatter Jack knew that it was now impossible to conceal the woman's hiding place, as the groans could be heard distinctly; but the desperate wretch was determined to make another effort to baffle and defeat the lame man.

"Be the holy farmer, sir!" he cried, "I thought she was out in the woods all—"

"Hush, you villain! She's under the floor in this room here—in the cellar. Come in—come in, and no more of your lying tricks, or I'll kill you!"

Hopping on one leg Maurice Collier dragged Tatter Jack to the inner room; and then the groans and moans were heard more distinctly.

"Up with that trap door, you scoundrel, and then down with you, and bring her up here. Oh, Mary—Mary, poor girl, what a place to put you! Ah, you villain, you'll suffer for this!"

"I didn't put her there, captain, at all—at all!" cried Tatter Jack as he lifted the trap door.

The man bent down to gaze into the dark cellar, crying:

"Mary—Mary, I'm coming to save ye! Down with you, you villain!"

"Down with yerself, and the devil give ye welcome!" cried Tatter Jack, springing suddenly on the unguarded man and flinging him into the cellar. "Ha! ha! ha! As brave and as clever as you are, me brave captain, ye're not able to be up and down with Jack Welsh yet, in the long run. Now, ye murdering thief, I'll have yer money and yer life at that!"

Then the triumphant wretch indulged in a yell of joy as he closed the trap and sprang out to the other room to secure one of the revolvers which Maurice Collier had left on the table.

"I must make haste and finish them both off, grab the money and be off afore them chaps he mentioned comes here," he muttered, as he stole back to the inner room. "I wonder if he's sensible after that toss. Oh, bedad, there's not a stir out of him, and the woman is quiet, too. There's nothing for me to do but finish the pair of them, take the money, set the house on fire and be off!"

CHAPTER XVII.

FAITHFUL FANNIE ON THE WATCH.

When Colonel Costello left the boarding house with Tobin, in order to go and drag Gerald from the station-house and carry him to that old house in the Jersey wood, his daughter Fannie was weeping.

The poor girl was deeply afflicted, indeed, at the incidents of the night.

"Oh, what can I do at all?" muttered Fannie. "I know father and that hateful Tobin are away now on a fiendish mission, and I have no one that I can call on to help the poor fellow. Oh, I do wish Mr. Collier and his nephew would come, and I'd confide in them. Poor Gerald! Poor Gerald! How they have abused you!"

And the distressed girl flung herself on a chair, striving to form some plan for Gerald's protection.

Hour after hour passed away, and she listened for her father's footsteps on the stairs, while she continued to weep and pray for her young lover, hoping also for the return of old Collier and his nephew.

Toward morning a violent ring was heard at the door-bell and the impetuous Fannie sprang downstairs to open it, muttering:

"Tis father or the others. I'll soon know what they have done with Gerald."

A moment after and her father's voice was heard at door, saying:

"You call down there as soon as you can, driver. I must not be able to leave my son."

"All right, sir," replied the driver.

And then Fannie heard the coach driving away from door.

"Oh, father!" she cried, as she opened the door, "I've been waiting for you. Where have you been all the night?"

"What are you doing down here at this hour, girl?" replied the angry man. "Up with you to bed at once. How is Oscar?"

"He's sleeping, sir. Oh, father, what have you been doing with poor Gerald?"

The colonel bent down his head to his daughter's ear, and answered:

"Never mention that name, while you live, again, or disown you, girl! The scoundrel is now in my power, and will die a dog's death! Here comes the servant. Get up to your room, I say."

The colonel made his excuses to the servant girl for disturbing her at that hour, and then he retired to the room where his son was sleeping.

It was after eight o'clock on the following morning that the colonel led his daughter down to the breakfast table, the first person he encountered there was the young daughter, Bernard Collier.

"Morning, colonel; good morning, Miss Fannie," whispered young dandy. "Hear Oscar met with an accident last night. By George, they gave me a rough shaking also. What has become of my uncle, colonel?"

"Why, he went to look for you, sir," replied Colonel Costello. "Has he not returned?"

"By Jove! he has not been in his room all night, colonel, but he'll come home all safe. A hardy old gentleman, my uncle of mine, Miss Fannie. I say, colonel, I hear you secured that daring rascal."

"Yes—yes," returned the colonel as he drew the young girl out in the hall. "I would like to speak to you a moment, Mr. Collier. How did you escape last night, after you were knocked down in that hall? I thought you were killed."

"Me killed! Ha! ha! that's a good joke, colonel, 'portentous' word. By Jove! I got a hard crack, though, you may see on it. Halloo, here's your man Friday."

"Ha! Tobin!" cried the colonel as that individual rushed into the hall. "What's the matter now?"

"Matter, sir? Why, that born devil has escaped again! He came near killing me. Come up to the room, sir, a moment for I have something saycret to tell you."

"Escaped again!" muttered the colonel as he followed Tobin upstairs, leaving the pretended Bernard Collier smiling in the hall. "He is a born devil in earnest, curse him! Tobin, all is lost unless we secure the woman again. Tell me what happened."

The last words were uttered in the private room to which Tobin had hastily led him.

"Listen to me, sir," said Tobin, "and don't be committing to blame me."

And the man gave an account of his encounter with the sailor in the cellar, his capture by Gerald and his assistance, and then his release by Jake Johnson, the driver, half an hour before.

In the meantime the pretended Bernard Collier was standing in the hall, muttering:

"I suppose that driver let Tobin go and the old sailor did offer to stop him, as I advised him. Now, I must be off to meet him, and look for mother and the others. Good morning, Miss Fannie."

"One moment, Mr. Collier, I beg of you," said Fannie.

laid her hand on his arm and led him into the parlor. "I want to speak a word to you."

"A thousand, if you like," was the lad's gallant reply as he met her earnest eyes on the fond girl before him. "You know I love you dearly."

"And I told you before that I can never return that love," said Collier. "Oh, if you care for me now, do me a kindness. Marry me to me."

"The confiding girl told the young man the whole story of her love and her sorrows, and the anguish she was in at that moment, fearing that her lover was in the power of his merciless enemies."

"Mr. Collier," she cried, "do assist me in saving this fellow. He hasn't a friend in the world save myself, and I want to save him. I know you are generous and you'll forgive me for refusing you when I tell you that I loved poor Gerald O'Grady ever since I first met him."

"Joye! Miss Fannie," returned the disguised lad, while his heart was bounding with joy, and he could hardly refrain from clasping the devoted girl to his breast, "but you are in a dilemma. Hang me if I wouldn't run off with the lucky dog and marry him at once."

"That is impossible, sir," said Fannie. "I would fly with him to-morrow, to-day, this hour, if he could only fly with me."

"He's here, and he's ready, my own darling, my fond girl, my truest of the true!" cried Gerald, as he clasped the young man in his arms and kissed her over and over again. "Don't be frightened, Fannie, for I am your own Gerald."

"The daring fellow pulled off the eyeglasses and the whiskers, displaying to Fannie the well-known features of her young lover."

"Merciful heavens, Gerald!" she cried, "put them on again. Oh, if father recognized you he would shoot you on the spot! Is it possible that you were Gerald all the time, and I didn't know you? Oh, what will we do now?"

"Run with me at once, darling," was the impetuous reply. "We have found a good friend who is able to protect us. I have my poor mother, whom your father has kept concealed all along. Oh, Fannie, darling, 'tis a pity he's your father, for he is the greatest villain unhung to-day!"

"Hush, Gerald—hush!"

"I can't, Fannie, when I think of all I have suffered at his hands. My darling, I know you'd forgive me if you saw me with him. Only for your sake I'd have lashed him last night, and killed Oscar. If I knew as much then as I know now I'd have killed him. But I won't talk of it any more. Come with me at once. Your father and Tobin are upstairs plotting against me. On with your things and slip out of the door. I'll meet you up at Broadway. Come, Fannie!"

"I don't ask me, Gerald!"

"Remember your promise long ago on the banks of the Hudson River, darling. Come with me now, and I'll love and guard you through life."

"I go with you, Gerald," said the confiding girl, "for I intend to remain with father and Oscar any longer. I'll wait for you forever, but do try and forgive them for my sake." An hour after, when Colonel Costello went to his daughter's room to call her to account for what she had said earlier on the previous evening, he found a note in the dressing-apartment which read as follows:

COLONEL COSTELLO.—I told you before that I would lash and rebuke your cowardly son, and I have kept my word to the best of my power as you are aware. I also promised you the same dose, and was inclined to spare you for your daughter's sake. If you seek to injure me again I'll keep my oath. I have now told you that I would marry your angel daughter in

spite of you, and I am now in a fair way to accomplish it as Fannie will be with me when you read this.

"Once for all, I tell you that it will be wise for you to surrender your ill-gotten wealth and give up persecuting me. If you do not heed this warning I will never attempt to stay the dreadful vengeance that is now pursuing you."

"Your dutiful son-in-law that soon will be,

"GERALD O'GRADY."

It is not possible to describe the rage and astonishment of the bewildered conspirator when he perused this note; and when he returned to Oscar's room, where Tobin awaited him, his face wore a livid hue, while his eyes were glaring with passion.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CUNNING TOBIN MAKES A DISCOVERY.

Colonel Costello was so fearfully agitated that he could not utter a coherent expression for some time, but strode to and fro in the room, now glaring at Tobin, and then at his lashed and branded son, while he hissed forth maledictions between his clenched teeth.

Tobin watched his master with a curious eye, and there was a peculiar expression in the villain's face as he looked at the note which the colonel still held in his hand.

"What is the matter now, father?" inquired Oscar, as he turned on his bed of pain.

"Matter!" cried the excited man. "The furies and all the fiends are conspiring against us. Fannie has eloped with that infernal young puppy!"

"With young Collier, sir?" inquired Tobin.

"No, no! With Gerald O'Grady. Oh, curse him—a thousand curses rest on him! He is in league with the devil himself."

"Begor, but there's three of his imps working hard for him, at all events," said Tobin; "and the sailor this morning seems to be the worst of them. Colonel, do you know what I'm thinking?"

"What is it, Tobin?"

"I'm just thinking we've been humbugged all along by that young dandy and his uncle, who calls himself Maurice Collier."

"What do you mean, Tobin? You don't mean to say that they are in league with our enemies?"

"I mane to say, and I'll maintain it, that they are not only working with our enemies, but that they are our worst enemies themselves. I'll wager all ye owe me now that this young dandy is no other than Gerald O'Grady himself, and that the old man is the very chap we left for dead up on the road in Jersey. Oh, colonel, 'tis we've been born fools intirely!"

"You're mad, Tobin!" cried the master. "The idea is ridiculous. Why, he was downstairs a while ago, and I suppose he's here yet."

"If I wasn't in such pain I'd laugh at you, Tobin," said Oscar.

"Faith, but I'll be bound 'tis he's laughing at all of us now," returned Tobin. "There's one consolation, anyway—the old devil is dead, sure!"

"Why, I'll go right away and call young Collier," said Colonel Costello, as he moved to the door. "Tobin, you are mad. Wait a moment."

"Mad, am I?" muttered Tobin, with a knowing smile. "I suspected that young buck all along, Master Oscar. D'ye mind how he led us on last night; do ye mind how he made off when we thought he was lying in the hall with his head broke; do ye mind how he come to the fore this morning, after he got away from me with the help of that old devil of a sailor?"

Where's the ould uncle, and why doesn't he show himself? How does it happen that Miss Fannie made off a while ago, after we left them together below? I tell you, Master Oscar, that——"

"Tobin, I believe you're right. Oscar—Oscar, we have been blind fools!" cried Colonel Costello, as he burst into the room, looking, if possible, more excited than ever.

"What have you discovered, father?" inquired Oscar.

"Why, the servant girl tells me that she saw Fannie get into a coach on Broadway with Bernard Collier, half an hour ago. Oh, this is too much!"

"And here comes Tatter Jack across the street!" cried Tobin, who had been looking out of the front window. "Be heaven, but he looks as if he had good news. I'll bring him up, sir."

And Tobin rushed downstairs to meet his companion in crime and treachery.

A few minutes afterward he returned to the bedroom, leading Tatter Jack with him.

"Great news intirely, sir," said Tobin, as he closed the door. "Speak aisy now and we'll have the game in our own hands."

"What is it, Tatter?" inquired the colonel, in an anxious tone. "You look as if you had found a crock of gold."

"And, bedad, but I have found a real mine, sir," replied Tatter, with a broad grin; "and 'tis you'll say I deserve it, when I tell ye what I done for ye. The woman is safe and the man you most dreaded on earth is safe with her."

"What do you mean, Jack?" inquired Colonel Costello.

"I mean what I say, sir. The woman that made away from ye last night is now safe and sound up in the ould house; and the man ye most dreaded on earth is safe with her."

"Who do you mean, Jack?" inquired the colonel again. "For heaven's sake, don't keep me in suspense!"

"Whisper here, sir, and I'll tell you," replied Jack as he placed his mouth to the colonel's ear and uttered a few words.

"Great heavens, you don't say so!" cried the colonel. "Why, man, he's not alive."

"He was alive, and not much worse an hour or so ago," responded Tatter. "He'll live till I get the police on him and get me reward. There's a thousand pounds offered for him in Australia, and a free pardon to any one who gives him up."

"And is it the man we see dead on the road be the horse, Tatter?" inquired Tobin.

"The same man; and 'tis a hard battle he gave me for a dead man. Howsumever, I got him down in the hole at last, with the woman, and he was stunned by the fall. When I slipped down there he was, lying speechless beside her, and she almost as bad herself."

"Glory to ye, Jack!" said Tobin. "Faith, but 'tis ye airned yer money. And what did ye do then?"

"I wasn't sooner out of the hole when I heard some fellows bawling outside; and who should they be but some country neighbors, set on be the two chaps that tackled us in the woods."

"Well, well; did you get rid of them?" inquired the colonel.

"Of course, sir. I told them that the city chaps must be either making fun of them or that they came to the wrong house; that they could come in and look for themselves, if they liked, but that me wife was sick with small-pox—that's what I give out there before—and 'twouldn't be safe for them to come in."

"You're a cute rascal, Jack," said Tobin; "so, of course, they went away?"

"Of course they did. Then I dressed me wound, slept till morning, and here I am. But I forgot to tell ye—who should I see driving up the road as I came through the woods, but the two divils that bate us last night, and inside the coach was a young dandy and a purty girl."

"Gerald O'Grady, with Fannie, going looking for his

mother!" hissed Colonel Costello. "I'd give half my fortune to have that young scoundrel in my power now!"

CHAPTER XIX.

A PLEASANT DRIVE AND A DISAPPOINTMENT.

When Gerald O'Grady left the old sailor on the side after having secured Tobin in the cellar, he returned to the old house, in order to find and put on the disguise suit he flung aside before he wreaked his revenge on Oscar Costello; and that he had not time to secure when attacked by the police.

The exultant lad found his suit, false whiskers, etc., in a secret closet which had been overlooked by the officers when he appeared before his "friend in need," in the disguise of the old sailor was completely surprised at the change.

"Thunder and lightning!" cried the old man as he saw the young dandy. "I thought that I could show you a thing or two in that way, but you can beat me, out and out."

"I put this on now, my good friend," returned Gerald, "you might know me when you see me again. And so you see it necessary to assume disguises also, sir?"

"I do, young man; but I hope you won't ask me any questions about myself, or I'm afraid we'll have a falling out. I promise you to fight your battles to the death against Colonel Costello; but it is not necessary that you should know anything about me than you do now."

"Never fear that I'll pry into your business, sir," responded Gerald. "Here's my address, if the scoundrel should ever find out. If Colonel Costello comes here first, secure him if you can."

"Trust to me, young man. Now I'll go and get something to eat and drink, for I'm almost famished."

And Gerald parted with the old sailor, wondering the while who and what he could be, for he was more than interested in his new friend.

"They're all down here by this time," he muttered as he turned his steps toward the boarding house. "If I go to the room now I may miss them. I'll go to my room and take a rest for a couple of hours, and then I'll be off to look for mother. I wouldn't wonder if Mr. Collier was home before me."

Though Gerald was in daily conference with the mysterious man who had befriended him he did not attempt to question him as to his real name and antecedents.

"From the interest he takes in mother and I," the young man would reason, "as well as from what Yankee Sullivan told me, I strongly suspect that he's my uncle from Australia; but it is not for me to force his confidence; and God knows he's acting like a father to me."

"Don't ever dream of marrying that villain's daughter," Gerald would say. "Put it out of your head for good. 'Tis only a boyish fancy, and you'll soon forget her, my friend."

Gerald would not reply to this unwelcome advice, for he did not like to oppose his protector; but he did cling to him with love, trusting that time or opportunity would decide in his favor.

And now he is wending his way to the boarding house with the hope of obtaining a private interview with Fannie before she goes out to join his mother.

Gerald slipped into the boarding house with his nightgown and then stole silently up to his room, without being aware that Fannie was watching for his footsteps until daylight.

In the morning, as we have seen, he encountered Colonel Costello and his daughter, and then Tobin's appearance gave the young man the desired opportunity.

When Fannie went up to her own room to make her pre-

for flight, Gerald hurried out in the street in the hope of finding some one of his trusty friends near at hand. And he was not disappointed, for the old sailor was watching him at one corner, while Ned Burke and the young driver, Smith, were on the lookout for him in a barroom close by. A peculiar whistle from the doorway of that barroom caused Gerald to invite the old sailor into the place; and then Gerald introduced his new friend to Ned Burke, while the latter pretended the young driver as one who had fought and worked valiantly in behalf of the hunted lad and his mother. When Ned Burke drew Gerald aside and told him of his father's disappearance, and of Maurice Collier's vigil in the farmhouse.

"We must get out there at once," said the impetuous Gerald. "I'm sure as you live, the rascal who kept her prisoner there seized her again and he's got her hiding in the neighborhood or in the house. You and this brave young man will go out once and get us another coach. Meet me on Broadway as soon as possible, and don't be surprised if I have a young lady with me."

Then Gerald held a hurried consultation with the old sailor, and it was decided that the latter would remain in the neighborhood to watch the movements of Colonel Costello and his associates.

"I'll take Fannie up with me to look for mother," muttered Gerald, as he hastened toward Broadway. "I know mother will be there, and Mr. Collier, whoever he is, will have to forgive me."

Gerald did not have long to wait for the devoted girl, and Ned Burke and the young driver were soon on hand with fresh horses and a close carriage.

On and on, over the plank road the carriage rattled, Ned Burke whistling "Love's Young Dream," and now and then making a joke with the driver, at the expense of those inside, who were almost as "happy as happy could be."

"I hope to goodness we'll find mother with Mr. Collier," said Gerald, when they reached the yard.

And great was the disappointment of all when they entered the house to find that neither the faithful watcher nor the woman was there to meet them.

"Search high and low!" cried Gerald to Ned Burke. "And the driver, make off to the next house to see if the people know anything about them. There's some treachery and mystery in all this."

At that moment Maurice Collier and his mother were lying in the dark cellar below, and neither of them was able to give the slightest signal to those who were so anxiously looking for them, for Tatter Jack Welsh had performed his vile work most effectually.

The young driver returned with some of the people who were frightened away by the report of the small-pox given by Tatter Jack, and hours were spent in the fruitless search for the missing ones.

At length it was agreed by all that Maurice Collier and his mother had been either murdered by their enemies or forced away to some secret hiding place in the neighborhood of New York City.

Gerald was somewhat despondent when evening approached, and it was decided to return to the city in order to watch the pirates' movements.

Having Fannie at a hotel in Jersey City the young man and his friends sought the old sailor and learned from him that neither Tobin nor Colonel Costello had left the house during the day.

A hang-dog looking rascal went in there this morning," said the old sailor, "and the fellow you call Tobin met him at the door. He came out soon after and brought back the horse that drove the coach last night. I think they're preparing for a journey, for the same driver took a big trunk

there this afternoon on his coach. The black-looking scoundrel is in there now. They're up to something."

"I'll soon find out what it is," said Gerald, "for I'll go right in."

CHAPTER XX.

"WHERE'S MY DAUGHTER?"

With a smiling face and outstretched hand Colonel Costello met the unsuspecting Gerald in the hallway.

At that moment the servant girl passed them in the hall, and Gerald caught a warning glance from her eye.

And Gerald walked into the dining-room after the servant girl.

"What's wrong, Mary?" he said, in a low voice, as he passed the girl on the way to the refrigerator.

"Here's a clean glass, Mr. Collier," replied the girl as she handed one to Gerald. "Beware of the colonel, for he knows you ran away with his daughter."

The last sentence was uttered in a low voice.

"Many thanks, Mary," said the young man, in a gay voice. "I won't forget you when I'm making my will."

And Gerald slipped a gold piece into the girl's hand as he continued, in a whisper:

"Slip out to the next corner and you'll see an old sailor waiting there. Just tell him for me that he and his friends must follow the travelers if I am not out with them."

Then the young man walked out into the hall and sprang up the stairs, taking two at a bound, though he felt that he was about to face a grave peril.

"He knows I ran off with his daughter," thought Gerald, "but I can laugh him out of that. If he has discovered who I am, then it is a struggle for life in earnest. I'll have it, at any rate, and who knows but I may find mother at once."

And the young man had one hand on the knob of the room door where Oscar was confined, while he was assuring himself with the other that his pistol was ready for instant use.

When he entered the room Oscar was sitting up in the bed and Colonel Costello and Tobin were standing near him.

One hasty glance around the apartment and preparations for a journey, as the large trunk, of which the old sailor made mention, was lying open in the middle of the large room, while two smaller ones were in the corner near the door.

"We have been anxiously looking for you, Mr. Collier," said Colonel Costello, the moment Gerald crossed the threshold. "What have you done with my daughter?"

As the man asked this abrupt question he sprang between Gerald and the door, turned the key in the lock, drew a revolver and aimed it at Gerald's head.

"'Tis only the daughter," thought the young man. "They don't suspect me otherwise."

Then, pretending to be dreadfully embarrassed, he stammered forth:

"Pon my honor, colonel—ahem—you know—you will excuse me—ahem—wouldn't resist, you know. Fannie is such a charming creature—ahem. Intentions strictly honorable—ahem! Fannie begs forgiveness, you know, and all that."

"This is all nonsense!" cried Colonel Costello, as he sprang on Gerald with the revolver. "You cannot humbug us any more. Off with that disguise. Tobin, seize the infernal scoundrel."

"Betrayed!" cried Gerald, as he sprang back in the room and drew his revolver. "Colonel Costello, and you, Tobin, stand back, or your blood will be on my hands! I promised your daughter to-day that I would spare you, sir. Keep back, you

hound, or I'll send a ball through your head! Aha! you cowardly dogs, Gerald O'Grady defies you all, still!"

The defiant lad had retreated to the back of the room, placed his back to a closet door and now stood facing his three foes, for Oscar was on the floor, pistol in hand, with the others.

"At him, Tatter!" cried Tobin.

Gerald felt the closet giving way suddenly behind him, and before he could move aside he received a blow on the head that felled him to the floor.

"Down on the villain!" cried the colonel.

And all four of his assailants flung themselves on Gerald, seized his arms, silenced his cries, and dragged him into the closet.

Gerald struggled manfully, kicking and striking, and endeavoring to call aloud for assistance; but it was all in vain, as they succeeded in gagging him and binding his hands and feet, after they had pounded him almost into unconsciousness.

"Off with his coat, wig and false whiskers, and you slip them on with the glasses, Tatter," said Tobin, as they flung Gerald in the closet and closed the door on him. "There's some one knocking at the door, colonel. 'Tis Master Oscar here that's touched in the head, you know, and he's kicking up the big rumpus in here."

Tatter Jack put on the disguise, Oscar sprang into the bed and then Colonel Costello opened the door.

"My son is a little deranged, ma'am," he said to the lady of the house, who had been somewhat alarmed at the uproar, "and we were compelled to use a little force to get him to bed. I'm sorry to say, Mrs. Duncan, that we will have to take him away to the asylum at once. Tobin, go order the carriage. Mr. Collier and I will be able to manage Oscar until you come back."

The landlady expressed her regrets, and the servant girl, who was standing behind her, saw Tatter, in Gerald's disguise, bending over the man in the bed and did not dream of treachery.

Tobin hurried away after the carriage, and then the colonel closed and locked the door again.

"Begor," said Tatter Jack, as he looked at himself in the glass, "but I'd make a fine young buck in this rig, so I would."

"Keep your mouth shut and you'll do," returned the colonel. "Now drag the villain out, and into that trunk with him. Oscar, are you able to travel with us to see the hound flayed alive?"

"I don't feel any pain now, father," was the son's reply, as he drew on his coat; "I could travel a hundred miles to gloat over his suffering. I will be able to lay on the lash with a vengeance."

"Ha! ha! Gerald O'Grady," hissed his enemies, as they dragged the helpless lad from the closet, "we have you in our power once more, and we are going to take you to see those you will be proud to meet. Your dearest friends will witness your miserable death, for we will cut you to pieces before the night is over."

"Begor, he's speechless, if he ain't dead, sir!" said Tatter, as he looked at Gerald's pale face.

"So much the better, if he is insensible," returned this relentless enemy. "Into the trunk with him; leave his face up so as he won't stifle, and then stuff the clothes around him so that he cannot use his limbs to make a noise. We'll soon have him where his cries will not be heard by many."

The trunk was packed and locked, when Tobin appeared with the driver, Jake Johnson.

Down the stairs, in the big trunk, Gerald was borne, followed by the colonel and the pretended young dandy, bearing Oscar between them.

"They've made it up nicely," said the servant girl as she

saw the party drive away from the door. "Why, Mr. Collier is all in all with the colonel."

"Danged if I know what to make of it all," said Ned Burke to his companions, as they stood under an awning and watched the departure. There's the lad himself going with him of his own free will."

"That's not our lad, you fool!" said the old sailor, who passed the door while the pretended dandy was assisting Oscar out to the carriage. "I saw the fellow's feet, and he was on common shoes. There's some treachery at work; I'll follow that carriage, as the lad ordered. Who knows but that muffled-up chap may be your friend?"

"My coach is around the corner," said the young driver. "That's Jake Johnson's coach, and that's Jake, himself, driving. Let's get right on after them at once. Danged if I don't believe we'll have another race and another fight to-night!"

Down Broadway rattled Jake Johnson's cab, and at a short distance behind rolled Gerald's friends.

When Sam Smith reached the Jersey ferry he saw that another coach was on the boat that was just leaving the slip.

"All the better," said he to Ned Burke. "We know where they're going, and I can catch up with them on the road."

"But they might kill the darling lad in the meantime," returned Ned Burke. "Bedad, but I'd give six months' pay to know whether he's with them at all or no."

"He's in that big trunk as sure as you live," said the old sailor. "Follow them to that old house you speak of, and we'll pounce on them when they least expect it."

CHAPTER XXI.

MAURICE COLLIER'S STRUGGLES AND AGONY.

When Maurice Collier was flung into the cellar by the treacherous Tatter, he struck head-foremost on the hard ground below, and then it was no shamming with the boy man, for he was insensible when his assailant slipped down to bind and gag him, as well as to secure his wallet.

When Maurice Collier opened his eyes again he was seated on a chair in the front room of the old house. Tatter Jack Welsh was holding a bottle of liquor to his lips, and Colonel Costello and the others were standing around him.

"Another swig, captain agra," said Tatter, with a fiendish smile, "and ye'll be yerself again. Begorra, but I thought we'd never bring ye to, and such fine sport in store for ye."

"You treacherous hound!" muttered Maurice Collier, as he stared around.

"Aisy—aisy, captain," whined Tatter; "sure, that's my thanks for bringing ye back to life, and to see yer friends all around ye."

"Friends!" cried Maurice Collier as he cast a look of hatred and defiance at Colonel Costello. "You infernal dog! I was a fool that I did not strangle you when I had the chance. Ha! Gerald, my poor fellow, have they got you also?"

Gerald could not answer this question save by a nod of the head, for he was bound and gagged and secured to a chair in the middle of the room, while Tobin and Jake Johnson were standing by him.

"Aye!" cried Colonel Costello, "we've got Gerald—the young cur—and his mother, too. Bring her out, Tatter, and let her see what her obstinacy has brought her to."

"Here they are, ma'am," said Tatter, as he led the afflicted woman into the room. "There's your fine son over there again."

"And there's your convict husband!" cried Colonel Costello, as he pointed to Maurice Collier. "Does he not look like a ghost?"

"Gracious heaven!" cried the woman, as she sprang toward the prisoner, "it isn't Eugene? Speak, sir, for God's sake; I'll know your voice if you are my own dear husband."

"Drag off this false beard, Mary," replied the man, in a low voice, "and then you'll know me."

"I know you now!" cried the woman as she tore away the false whiskers. "Great God! 'tis my own dear brother, Dick Nolan!"

"Dick Nolan!" cried Colonel Costello as he glared at the prisoner's manly, open countenance. "As sure as I live, it is Dick Nolan! Why did you tell me it was Eugene O'Grady, you scoundrel?"

The last sentence was addressed to Tatter Jack, who was also staring at the prisoner.

"Pon me sowl, but I thought 'twas the captain himself," replied Tatter; "and, sure, what's the odds, for they were all one in Australia, and the mate, here, is as good as the captain any day."

"Oh, Dick—Dick!" cried Mrs. O'Grady, as she embraced her brother, "what I have suffered from that fiend there; and poor Gerald, my darling boy, is now in his power. Can't you do anything to save him?"

"Keep up your heart, my dear Mary," returned her brother; "I know——"

"Drag that woman from him and see that the doors are secured!" cried Colonel Costello. "Dick Nolan, you sought my life, and you helped that young cur to torture my son last night. Now I will not show you or him any mercy. Stop that woman's cries, and tie up the young cur to the bed-post!"

"See here, sir," said Jake Johnson, the driver, "this thing is going too far. I didn't bargain to stand by and see a young fellow flogged to death before his mother. I'm not a regular savage, I ain't, and I won't stand that!"

"Don't be a fool, driver, but let us have our way and you'll be well paid."

"Hanged if I can stand this!" returned the driver as he met the appealing glances cast on him by the afflicted woman. "I'm a rounder, I am, and I can lay out a man, but I can't take a hand in such work as this. Come out with me, missus, and you won't see it."

Mrs. O'Grady's hands were bound and a gag was in her mouth, or she would have uttered blessings on this man's head; while as it was, she could only appeal to him with tears and moans to save her son.

"Go out, Mary," said her brother, "and pray to God to send help to your son."

"Yes, yes, mother!" cried the undaunted Gerald, "if I must suffer, don't you remain to witness it. God bless you, my good fellow, though you are acting with these cursed, miserable cowards."

Colonel Costello saw that Jake Johnson was stubborn in his purpose, and as he did not care to provoke the driver, he cried:

"Let them out, Tobin. Driver, on your life, don't let that woman escape. Now, Oscar, get ready to lay on the villain!"

The driver led the heart-broken woman from the house, and the door was no sooner closed on them than Oscar Costello, lash in hand, advanced on the defiant Gerald.

"Now, you vile dog!" cried the vengeful young villain, "I'll pay you back with interest upon interest. Another sup of that brandy, Tobin, for I must have double strength."

"Faith," said Tatter Jack, "'tis the other chap that wants the Dutch courage now."

"Not I," returned Gerald, as he shot a glance at his young enemy. "The last breath will leave my body before I'll quail before you dogs! Uncle, if I die here, you will live to avenge me!"

"By the God that's over us, but I will, Gerald, if my spirit has to come back to haunt them forever! Ha! ha! the coward

quails before the brave lad. See—see! he staggers and he's down. Ned Costello, the hand of God has struck your son. Gerald, my lad, see him before you."

"He's only fainted, sir!" cried Tobin, as he sprang to lift Oscar, who had fallen to the floor just as he was in the act of raising the lash on his defiant enemy. "More brandy, Tatter. He's coming to, all right now, sir."

"Place him in a chair and I will go on with the lashing," cried Colonel Costello, as he seized the heavy lash. "A father's vengeance on you, you young fiend! Now——"

The hand was raised to strike Gerald on the bare back, when a loud voice at the corridor rang out:

"A father's vengeance on you, you hell-hound of the world!"

At the same moment a pistol shot rang out from outside and Colonel Costello uttered a cry of pain as he dropped the lash, yelling:

"We are betrayed, Tobin! I'm shot through the hand. Out with the lights and fight to the death!"

"To the death it is, then!" yelled the voice at the window. "Burst in the door, my brave men!"

CHAPTER XXII.

THE THREATS IN THE DARK AND THE STRUGGLE IN LIGHT.

"Hurrah—hurrah!" yelled Gerald, as he heard the thundering at the door, while he endeavored to burst the cords that secured him. "Now, you infernal hounds, we'll see who has the upper hand at last!"

"Silence, Gerald!" was the warning whisper from his uncle as he sprang to the lad's side, dragging the chair to which he was secured with him. "The fight is not over yet, and we are prisoners."

"And you'll be the first to fall!" hissed a fierce voice in reply.

The room was then in darkness, as Tobin had put out the lights at Colonel Costello's command, but the nephew and uncle recognized the voice of their ancient enemy above the thundering at the stout door.

They could also hear Tobin's voice inquiring:

"Wouldn't it be better to slip out the back way, sir, and make off? The devil only knows how many of them is outside."

"Not a step will I fly!" responded the desperate man. "You and Jack Welsh stand by me, and we'll kill them all! Oscar, are you able to stand and fight with us, my son?"

"I am, father," was the faint reply.

"Where can that driver be?" continued the colonel. "Oh, we were fools to let him go!"

"He's guarding the woman outside," returned Tobin, "and you may rely on him on a pinch. Heavens, sir, but they'll soon be in on us!"

"Fire on them as they come in!" was the bold order, "and shoot them down like dogs! My right hand is useless, but I'll guard the window with my left. Hold, outside there, a moment!"

"Will you give up, then?" said a stern voice outside the door.

"Who are you and what do you want?" demanded the colonel.

"We're your bitter enemies, Colonel Costello, and we are friends to the people you hold prisoners!" was the loud response. "Give them up at once or we'll murder every one of you!"

"You'll murder your friends," cried the defiant colonel, "if you don't make off! The moment you burst in that door we'll blow their brains out. Oscar, clap your pistol to the young cur's head. I'll kill this outlawed convict!"

A deep silence followed this threat, and Gerald felt the barrel of the revolver at his forehead, while Oscar seized him by the throat, as he muttered in his ear:

"I'll kill you, Gerald O'Grady, if it was the last shot I ever fired. I'll have your life for my eye and the disgraceful punishment you gave me last night."

"I'm worth two dead men yet, you cur!" yelled Gerald, as he once more endeavored to burst his bonds. "And you'll never be anything but a miserable dog. Burst in the door, Ned Burke. They haven't the heart to shoot us. In with it, my friends, and kill the dogs!"

"Aye, aye!" yelled his uncle. "And take that, you infernal villain!"

As the strong man spoke he raised the chair to which he had been secured and struck Colonel Costello full in the face, felling him to the floor and knocking the pistol from his hand.

The revolver exploded as it struck the floor and Tatter Jack yelled:

"Murder alive, but I'm hit in the leg! Oh, bad cess to the luck, but I'm a-irning me——"

A thundering crash at the door, a cry of rage from those outside, and the old sailor and Ned Burke dashed into the room, followed by Sam Smith, the young driver, with a pistol in one hand and the carriage lamp in the other.

"Don't shoot your friends!" yelled the old sailor as he glanced around the room for a moment.

Bang! bang! bang! went three shots, as the desperate conspirators fired on their prisoners as well as their assailants.

Gerald O'Grady could feel a sharp sensation in his ears as Oscar's weapon blazed before him, and then he heard a fierce voice, crying:

"He's murdered the lad. Take that, you cowardly whelp! Down with them all, friends!"

Ned Burke felt a ball go whizz by his head before he could comprehend the situation of friends and foes; and then he sprang at Tobin, who was in the act of firing at the old sailor.

"What in the thunder is all this?" yelled a voice at the door as Jake Johnson appeared on the scene and stared at the desperate combatants.

It was a scene to cause the old rounder's heart to leap with excitement; and it did not take him long to decide as to the course of action.

"Thunder and lightning!" he yelled. "This is a regular rough-and-tumble, and I must take a hand in, right off! Sam Smith, you and me have an old crow to pluck, and now's our chance. I'm at you!"

And before the young driver could turn to defend himself, Jake Johnson sprang on him, striking him on the side of the head with his revolver and sending him reeling to the floor.

Picking up the lamp, Jake Johnson placed it on the window, and then he made a dash at the old sailor, who had just succeeded in setting Gerald at liberty.

At that moment piercing cries and screams were heard outside, and two female forms rushed into the room.

"My son! my son!" cried Mrs. O'Grady, as she stared at the scene of violence. "Oh, Gerald—Gerald! have they murdered you?"

"Father—Oscar—Gerald!" cried Fannie Costello, as she wrung her hands in anguish, "are you all dead?"

As the young girl uttered these words she flung herself on the prostrate man, who was lying on the floor, completely exhausted by the struggle with Gerald's uncle, who was lying insensible near him.

Tobin and Ned Burke were pounding away at each other when they heard the cries sent up by the alarmed females, and then they stopped the struggle and stood panting for breath.

Oscar Costello was lying near the bed to which Gerald had been bound, and he was glaring up at friends and enemies, when Fannie rushed to her father's side.

The young driver was somewhat stunned by the sudden blow given him by Jake Johnson, but he was now on his feet again, and it was evident, from the fierce glances cast at his late assailant, that he meditated retaliation.

Tatter Jack was still crouching on the floor, and hugging the wounded leg, while he continued to bemoan his hard fortune, in low tones, and watching the while, with cunning eyes, for a chance to escape from a fray which was not all over, as he judged, by any means.

The old sailor stood for some moments staring at the woman and Gerald, and it was evident that he was fearfully agitated, as he muttered:

"My God! can it be possible that we all meet in this way? Poor Mary—my darling wife—how you have changed since I saw you. And my son, too. Great God! what a miracle it was that I was led here to save him! They all think me dead. None of them expect me yet. How will it all end?"

And this was the very question that was running in Tobin's mind when he realized the position of affairs at that moment; while Jake Johnson was equally anxious for a settlement, as he said:

"If this row is going to be fought right out here, let us see how we stand."

"There's the villain that knocked yer off yer coach last night!" cried Tobin, as he sprang to the driver's side, while he pointed to Ned Burke. "I'll stand by Colonel Costello and his son to the bitter end against them, and I warn ye all that ye are taking the part of convicted felons."

"That they are, an' I'll swear to it!" cried Tatter Jack as he crawled toward Tobin and Jake Johnson.

"For mercy's sake!" cried Fannie, as she saw that the fight was about to be renewed, "would you commit murder before us? Oh, Gerald—Gerald! do stop this cruel work. Look at my father—look at poor Oscar. Stop, Gerald—stop!"

"There's only one way to stop bloodshed!" cried the old sailor, in a husky voice.

Colonel Costello was now sitting on the floor, his daughter bending over him, and his son and friends around him, for Oscar had moved over to the side of the room where his father was lying.

"What is that, sir?" demanded the colonel as he stared at the old sailor, while he seized the revolver that had fallen from him. "We'll show no mercy to that young dog, while I have a hand left to shoot him down!"

"I defied you before and I defy you now, you villain!" cried Gerald. "Mother, stand aside and let us fight it out. Fannie, for God's sake leave the house a while. Death alone can decide between us. You see, your father is bent on my destruction."

CHAPTER XXIII.

STANDING AT BAY.

Gerald had secured the weapon which the old sailor had knocked out of Oscar's hand, and he now stood beside his mother, the blood flowing from the wound in his ear, while the old sailor, Ned Burke, and the young driver took their stand beside him.

"Peace, all of you!" cried the old sailor, in the same husky tones, "and listen to me!"

"Fire ahead!" replied Jake Johnson. "Let's all lower our shooters till we hear what the old sailor coon has to say, though I don't see what right he has to interfere."

"Right!" yelled the disguised man as he dragged away his false beard. "The best, the holiest right a man could have. This woman is my dear wife! This brave lad is my only son!"

"Eugene! Eugene!" cried the woman, as she started at the familiar face, and then flung herself into her husband's arms. "Oh, merciful father! are you alive, after all?"

Tobin was in the act of binding a handkerchief around Colonel Costello's wounded hand when the old sailor announced himself to friends and enemies, and the desperate conspirator could not suppress a cry of surprise as he recognized the countenance of the man whom he had so treacherously wronged, and who was supposed to be sleeping death's sleep far away in that Australian bay.

"Is it himself, sir?" inquired Tobin, in a low voice.

"Curses on him, yes," was the reply. "Tobin, now or never, must we crush them!"

"Is it the captain in airnest?" said Tatter Jack as he stared at the old sailor. "Heavens alive, but we're in for bloody work now, and no mistake. The other was bad enough, but he's the devil——"

"If he had all the fiends in the lower regions on his side I'd crush him!" hissed Colonel Costello, as he looked around at his friends, as if to count heads.

"They're five of them agin five of us, sir," said Tobin, "and it won't be any child's play."

Fannie Costello, who was standing near her father and regarding Gerald and his parents with intense interest, overheard this plotting.

"Oh, father!" she said, in earnest tones, "do give up this cruel work. They will murder you all, for you know that they will not give up to you. Gerald is——"

"Go to him, you hussy!" cried the enraged man as he flung the girl away from him. "I'll kill him before your eyes. Tobin, and all of you, stand by me, now, and we'll fight them to the bitter end."

"Costello, you infernal villain!" commenced Gerald's father, "you know that you deserve death at my hands, and here I swear to God that you and I will not leave this house to-night without settling accounts; listen to what I propose."

"Rattle it out!" cried Jake Johnson.

"I am speaking to you in particular," returned Eugene O'Grady, "for I understand from my wife that you befriended her to-night, and I don't want to kill you if it can be helped."

"Don't worry about me," said Jake Johnson, with a defiant smile. "I guess I can take care of myself. But go on with your proposition."

"That fiend," continued Gerald's father, "betrayed me in Ireland, and then he robbed my wife and son of my property. He dragged my wife from her home in Ireland and enticed her here to meet me, only to confine her in this house, to compel her to sign a paper in which it was asserted that my son, here, was never born in wedlock."

"He did that so that he could have my property in Ireland; and he did more. He endeavored to murder my brave son after having him disgraced and branded as a common felon. I have not time to tell you of all his villainy at this time, but you have heard and seen enough to convince you, if you are not as great a scoundrel as those rascals who are his tools, that he does not deserve your aid and that it must be a struggle to the death between us."

"Oh, sir," cried Fannie, "do not say that! Oh, Gerald! Gerald! for my sake——"

"I told you, Gerald," interrupted his uncle, "that this girl would interfere. Young lady, it would be better for you and my sister, there, to leave the house until this affair is settled."

"I won't leave," persisted Fannie. "Oh, great heavens, what will I do?"

"Leave the house and wait outside, Mary, I command you!" said Eugene O'Grady to his wife. "And you, Miss Costello, will go with her. This is no place for ladies."

There was something so stern and commanding in the man's voice that he was obeyed without a murmur, and his wife took

Fannie by the hand and led her forth, though each of them cast appealing glances on those whom they loved.

"Now," said Gerald's father, "I propose that this hound will fight me like a man. Costello, will you stand before me for your life, or must I kill you as I would a dog?"

"And I'll fight Oscar!" cried Gerald. "He shot me in the ear to-night, and I want another eye for it, at least. Stand out, you cur, and face me!"

"I'll not honor a convicted felon by fighting a duel with him," sneered Colonel Costello; "but I'll shoot him like the robber that he is. Take that!"

"None of that, boss!" cried Jake Johnson, as he struck up the colonel's pistol. "He's offered you the square thing, as far as I can see, and I won't stand to you if you don't take him up. Hold back there, you fellers, and I'll fix things!"

As the man uttered these words he sprang in front of the two parties and waved them back, just as Gerald and his friends were about to fire on their hated foes.

"Stand aside there, all of you!" again cried Jake Johnson; "only you, boss, and your man. We don't want no wholesale slaughter here, if we can settle it otherwise. The first man who offers to fire, I'll shoot him down! He offers to fight you fair, boss, and if you're not a coward you'll take him up."

"Have at him, sir!" whispered Tobin to his master.

"Stand before me there, you whelp!" yelled the enraged colonel. "I have only my left hand, but I'll kill you with that. I always hated you, Eugene O'Grady, and I'll crush you now!"

"I'll take no advantage of you, villain that you are!" replied Gerald's father, as he changed his weapon to the left hand. "Now, then, it's the last time we'll ever meet on earth; and know you, before you die, that I am a free man and I can return to my own land and home to-morrow."

As the exile uttered these words he drew a document from his pocket and held it up before his adversary, as he continued:

"As I may fall now, I will tell you all something that will interest you. Don't give the word to fire for a few minutes, my good man."

"When I attempted to escape with you that night, Dick," commenced Gerald's father, "you knew that the guard fired on us while we were in the water, and that I was struck and went down."

"I thought I'd never see you again, Eugene," said his brother-in-law.

"I managed to reach the opposite shore, though I was wounded in the shoulder, and I hid there in a cove for a few days until an English man-of-war put into the bay. Before long a boat put out for the shore, and a party of sailors, carrying something in a box, landed near the cove. A dead sailor was in that box, and they were on shore for the purpose of burying their shipmate."

"That night I dug up the box, stripped the corpse of its clothes, and put on it your convict suit, leaving the body on the beach."

"With the sailor's clothes on I walked to the next settlement, told the people that I was a deserter, and claimed assistance. Unfortunately—or rather fortunately, as it turned out—a party of sailors from another vessel came to the settlement that night in search of fresh provisions, and they bore me away with them."

"As they were short-handed on board, I was allowed to work as a hand, and I was not punished as a deserter. On board that man-of-war was an old schoolmate of mine, serving as an officer, and he recognized me at once, though he did not betray me. I was on board of that vessel for more than a year, and we cruised all over the world until we came to New York."

"While out in the Chinese waters the ship's boat attacked some pirates on shore and they were badly beaten in the first

attempt. The captain then led the second attack, and I was in the boat with him. The pirates fought like devils, driving us back to the boat and killing more than half of us. Just as we were retreating to the shore the captain, who was the last to turn, was shot down. I turned to see if he was all safe, when I saw half a dozen of the scoundrels trying to kill him.

"Well, all that I will now say is that I managed to beat off the pirates and get the wounded captain safe back to the boat. The brave man recovered, returned to the place in a month and destroyed the pirates. He thanked me warmly for saving him; I was placed in a better position on board the ship and treated very kindly by all.

"All this time I was not aware that my old schoolmate had recognized me, and when we reached New York I made up my mind to desert the ship, make my way in disguise back to Ireland and punish, at all hazards, the scoundrel there, who, I had learned, was persecuting my wife and son.

"The first night I landed in New York I fell in with some scoundrels who robbed me of all I had, leaving me nothing but the old suit you now see on me. But for all that I was determined to go back to Ireland, until I met my son here and saw Costello at the same time."

The old sailor turned to Gerald as he continued: "When I left you this evening I was going along the street, looking for some place to get something to eat, when who should clap me on the shoulder but my old schoolmate, the officer who had recognized me on board the vessel. Here's what he gave me, and this is what he told me:

"After the captain recovered, my friend—for he is a good friend—told him all about me, for he knew my history well, as he knows of your villainy, Costello. The captain became more than interested in me, and he used all the influence he could command to have the government grant me a full pardon. There it is, Gerald, my son. He is striving to effect your pardon also, for he knows that you were persecuted by the villain and his son."

As the exile uttered the last words he flung the document to Gerald and then turned to Jake Johnson, saying:

"Now, sir, you can stand aside and give the word. Colonel Costello, ask God to pardon you, for I will kill you!"

"Are you ready to fight it out now?" cried Jake Johnson, as he stepped aside. "I will count three and you fire on the last word. Ready?"

"Hold, there!" cried a stern voice at the door.

And the next moment two men in the British naval uniform sprang into the room, followed by half a dozen policemen and some countrymen.

"Who is Colonel Costello?" demanded Captain Travers as he looked around.

"That's my name, sir," replied the baffled man.

"Arrest him, officers!" cried the captain as he turned to the policemen, "and all those who are with him."

"With what am I charged?" inquired Colonel Costello, as the officers seized him.

"Abduction, conspiracy and attempted murder," replied the officer. "Here's my warrant for you, and these fellows here with you. Aha! you villain, you can't play the small-pox game around here again."

"The devil take you all!" growled Tatter Jack, to whom the last sentence was addressed. "What a fool I was that didn't make off with what I had. Oh, me leg—me leg! I'm bleeding to death!"

"And I'll not stand this disgrace," said Colonel Costello, as he placed his revolver to his head and fired, even while the officers were holding him.

The weapon did not fail him, as the ball entered his brain and he fell on the ground a corpse.

"Oh, God!" cried Oscar Costello, as he flung himself on his

father's body, "did I ever dream it would come to this. I'll go mad! Father—father! what will I do without you?"

* * * * *

Oscar Costello did lose his reason that night, and he spent the remainder of his days in a lunatic asylum.

Tobin and Tatter Jack were arrested, tried and convicted of the crimes charged against them, and they were sentenced to ten years in the Jersey State Prison.

Jake Johnson was also arrested as their accomplice, but he managed to break jail and make off to California.

When Gerald O'Grady sought Fannie Costello that night he learned from the devoted girl that she was instrumental in saving his father from killing his enemy.

Fannie saw (from the window of the hotel in Jersey City where Gerald had placed her) the carriage drive past containing her father and the others, and she felt that they were driving to the old house.

Hastening downstairs she called a police officer and appealed to him to aid her in preventing the perpetration of a crime.

It happened that the two British officers heard the appeal, for they were guests at the hotel and they suspected at once that Fannie's father was the man who had wronged the brave sailor in whom they were so much interested.

Hastening to the authorities the officers took measures to arrest the conspirators; and, in the meantime, the anxious Fannie hired a conveyance to take her to the scene of the outrage.

As she was hastening through the woods to the house, having left the conveyance with the driver on the roadway, Fannie encountered Mrs. O'Grady, where she had been secured to a tree by Jake Johnson, when the rounder returned to take a hand in the fight.

Of course, the devoted girl was terribly affected by her father's death, as well as by the knowledge that her brother was a madman.

Gerald spent some months in consoling her, and then he made her his wife, with the consent of his father and mother, as well as that of the stern uncle.

Neither Gerald nor any of his people ever returned to Ireland.

His father disposed of his property in that country and bought an estate in Westchester.

Dick Nolan, after some years of wandering, received a pardon from the British government, and then settled down with them.

Sam Smith, the young driver, received a recompense for his services, and started in the livery business in New York, where he is now prospering and happy.

As for Ned Burke he would never leave Gerald and his wife; and the bold soldier is now at home on that splendid farm where the exile and his wife, with Fannie and Gerald, are spending their days in peace and happiness.

[THE END.]

Read "THROUGH THICK AND THIN; OR, OUR BOYS ABROAD," by Howard Austin, which will be the next number (220) of "Pluck and Luck."

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